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VOLUME 33



# CLASSICS IN RUSSIA 1700-1855

*Between Two Bronze Horsemen*

BY

MARINUS A. WES



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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The two bronze horsemen of the title are the equestrian statue of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius on the Capitol in Rome and the equestrian statue of the Russian czar Peter the Great in Senate Square in St Petersburg. Of the many equestrian statues put up in Europe through the ages, these two are undoubtedly among the most famous.

The statue of the 'wise' emperor Marcus Aurelius would most certainly have been forgotten, and probably not even preserved, if the Christians from after the fall of the Roman Empire in the West had not erred in thinking that it was a statue of the first Christian emperor of Rome and the founder of Constantinople, the hard-handed Constantine the Great. The statue of Peter the Great might have been preserved, but most certainly would have been forgotten, if in his poem 'The Bronze Horseman' Pushkin—Russia's first classic poet—had not made it a symbol of the contrast between the awe-inspiring cool omnipotence of a great but hard-handed emperor and the pitiful lack of power of the common man, who is pursued by this omnipotence in his dreams.

The statue of Marcus Aurelius was already regarded as classic in the Renaissance. Meanwhile the statue of Peter has also become classic, not in the last place owing to Pushkin's poem. In the title of this book the two statues symbolize the ancient classics of the Graeco-Roman world and the way in which these worked as a ferment and served as a foundation for the new classics of Russia.

In 1991 this book appeared in the Netherlands under the title *Tussen twee bronzen ruiters. Klassieken in Rusland 1700-1855* (ISBN 90 263 1107 9). The main difference from the original version is that the notes have been considerably expanded for the English edition. It was not always easy to find the literature mentioned in the notes. I have all the more reason for gratefully acknowledging the unrivalled service offered by the Slavonic Library of the Helsinki University Library, where I rarely looked in vain for very many publications which were unobtainable elsewhere in Western Europe.

In 1986–1987 the University of Groningen granted me a year's leave to study the material which I had collected. During this year I stayed at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Wassenaar, where I wrote the first four chapters and outlined the remaining five.

The publication of this book in English was made possible by a most welcome translation grant from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (N.W.O). I count myself fortunate that I found Anthony P. Runia prepared to translate the book.

Groningen, January 1992

M.A. Wes

## INTRODUCTION

Every culture has its gallery of classics. The gallery has several halls. There is a hall of painters, a hall of sculptors, a hall of composers, and so on. No one will deny Raphael, Rembrandt, and Renoir their place of honour in the hall of painters. No one will dispute that Phidias, Michelangelo, and Rodin belong in the room of classic sculptors and Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven in that of the composers.

The largest hall is that of the poets and writers. At the beginning we find Homer and Virgil, Greek tragedy and Latin comedy, Plato and Augustine, and all those other heroes of the mind. Together they are called the sources of European culture. In the course of time there have been remarkable and interesting changes in the allotment of honoured places. Around 1800 an expert like Wilhelm von Humboldt could categorically state that there were only four really classic poets: Homer, Pindar, Sophocles, and Aristophanes. He has been proved wrong by, for instance, the many modern performances and film versions of the tragedies of Aeschylus and Euripides.

Yet everyone agrees that the Greek and Roman classics, even if the list of these might vary from country to country and from time to time, stand at the basis of everything that came after them. They stand, as it were, in the central hall of a gallery to which many other halls, halls of new classics, were later added. The work of many modernist and even postmodernist classics, too, is inextricably bound up with the classics of antiquity: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and Hermann Broch would not have achieved what they achieved without Virgil. An architect like Ricardo Bofill emphatically uses the forms of classical architecture of antiquity. The sculptures of Henry Moore have been compared to the prehistoric "Cycladic idols" of the Greek world in the time that it had yet to become a Greek world. Sigmund Freud has made Oedipus into a Greek mythological figure whose name is well-known to everyone otherwise ignorant of the Greeks.

New halls have been added to the central hall. The heroes of antiquity have met with competition: Dante and Petrarch in Italy,

Shakespeare in England, Cervantes in Spain, Corneille and Racine and Molière in France, Goethe and Schiller in Germany, and so on. Of course, there is also a Russian hall. In it we find the laurelled portraits of Pushkin and Gogol, Goncharov and Turgenyev, Tolstoy and Chekhov. The list is not complete.

What makes an author or a literary work "classic"? This question has often given rise to all kinds of profound meditations on "the essence" of what is called classic. The question can also be answered pragmatically, for instance by saying that a literary work is classic if it has been included in the world-famous English series of *Penguin Classics*. In that case we assume that the publisher of this series and his board of editors have considered the question of "the essence" with due care and an awareness of their international responsibility. This is, of course, too easy as a solution, but it is none the less useful for that.

The most recent list of *Penguin Classics* carries ten names of classic Russian authors. That number compares poorly with the number of 28 Greek and 26 Roman authors in the same series (not including anthologies). The difference becomes much smaller if one considers that the ten Russians together account for 41 books in the *Penguin Classics*. The joint contribution of the 26 Romans is only slightly larger: 46 books. The 28 Greeks have a higher tally: 63 books. What is more, the ten Russians cover a period of less than a century: from Pushkin to Chekhov. The Roman authors span a period of more than seven centuries: from Plautus to Boethius. This period is more than twelve centuries for the Greeks, if we assume that Homer should be dated at around 700 B.C.

It is also interesting to look at the contribution of the individual classic authors: Plato is number one with eleven books; the second place is for Dostoevsky with ten books; the third and fourth for Tolstoy and Turgenyev with nine and eight books respectively. Cicero is best represented among the Roman writers, but with six books he is no more than above average, just outdoing Aristotle and Plutarch with five books each.

If we really wanted to say something meaningful about the share of all these classical authors in the "cultural market" of the end of the twentieth century, we would have to know more about printing and sales figures over a number of years. And even then: how many people read every book they buy? Nevertheless, it

might well be that the ten Russians have found more readers in the past thirty years than the fifty-odd Greeks and Romans. The hall of antiquity in the gallery of classics has increasingly become a side room, where many visitors are reluctant to spend much of their time.

If it is in fact true that the classics of Graeco-Roman antiquity are the cradle and source of inspiration of European culture, how did this inspiration exactly work and how was this body of thought exactly transmitted? For the countries which now form the European Community this question was often a subject of study, and still is, even more so than before. In the U.S., too, the study of the "reception history" of Graeco-Roman antiquity is a focus of much interest.

Russia is a different story. But then Russia is a different country. It did not take part in what Jacob Burckhardt called "the rediscovery of antiquity", a rediscovery which took place in about the same period as Columbus's discovery of America and the discoveries from Marco Polo to Magellan. It was mainly with regard to the rediscovery of antiquity that Burckhardt used the term "rebirth", Renaissance, to refer to the cultural aspects of this expansion of Europe.

Unlike Europe—or should we say the rest of Europe?—Russia did not share in this Renaissance, with its various effects on each country. Russia did not have a room in what Mikhail Gorbachov has called the "Common House of Europe".

Was it really necessary for Russia to enter the circle of European nations? And was it good for Russia? Peter the Great, around 1700, was the first Russian to answer this question fully in the affirmative. He was moreover in a position to force Russia—if necessary with a strong arm—to turn its gaze to the West. Following in his footsteps, Catherine the Great and young Alexander I, each in their own way, sought contact with Middle and West European culture. In Russia itself this met with opposition.

Throughout the nineteenth century, and indeed far into the twentieth century, there was always a strong movement of people who reacted defensively and suspiciously to overly intimate relations with the West. Would not the Russian identity be lost in an imaginary Europe-without-(cultural-)frontiers including Russia? Just as Peter the Great's removal of the centre of government from Moscow to his new city St Petersburg is explained in all history



books as the opening of a window to the West, so the removal of the centre of government from St Petersburg back to Moscow two hundred years later can, in retrospect, be regarded as a drastic attempt to stem the influx of West European thought. Just as Peter the Great presented himself as *Imperator*, then a new title for Russia, and thus as an emperor after the Roman, *Western Roman* model, so the abdication of the last governing emperor of Peter's dynasty, Nicholas II, can be regarded as the end of this Russian emperorship after the Western Roman model. The analogy with the end of the Western Roman emperorship of antiquity, like all analogies, does not quite hold: after the last Western Roman emperor had abdicated from the throne in 476, the new rulers, Germanic "barbarians", left him to spend the rest of his life in idleness, or at least in reasonable peace and quiet, in a villa somewhere on the sun-drenched bay of Naples. The last Russian emperor was stood up against a cold wall and murdered with his family in 1918.

The history of the classical tradition is an aspect of the history of Russia's orientation to Western Europe in general. It is an aspect of the Europeanization of Russia. The supporters of this Europeanization in the eighteenth and nineteenth century took it for granted that if Russian culture was to become a European culture, the cradle and source of inspiration of this European culture, Graeco-Roman antiquity, would also have to become available in Russia. There was only one way of achieving this: knowledge of classical culture would have to be imported. That is in fact what happened, comparable with the way that, a few centuries before, the countries of Western Europe which had never belonged to the domain of ancient Rome had imported the same knowledge from Italy.

Anyone who imports goods also wants those goods to be distributed and used. How did this distribution of goods work in Russia and what use was made of them? What was the effect of importation, distribution, and use? Education has always been the logical means of distribution for the product knowledge. Education in Latin and Greek was made a structural part of the Russian system of education in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Knowledge of the two classical languages became a prerequisite for anyone wanting to study anything at a university. What were the goals of those who devised this educational policy, and what

were the results in practice? Did in fact the desired knowledge of the humanities, "the things which make a human being more human", make for more humanity, for civilization?

Knowledge of classical literature and culture was not only transmitted through education in and reading of Greek and Latin writers in the original language. It was also transmitted—and this, of course, does not apply to Russia alone—because people came into contact with the material and visual aspects of antiquity—architecture and the visual arts—and through translations. Translation as an instrument of cultural transmission has always had a much larger reach than education. What would even an educated reader in Western Europe know of Anna Karenina if there had been no translators? Five translators have a greater effect than five hundred teachers. But one can also say that five hundred teachers are perhaps needed to produce five decent translators. True classicists believe that Homer's epic poems should only be read in Greek, true Slavists insist that the poems of Pushkin are "untranslatable". Their arguments are watertight. But luckily there have always been translators who have ignored this and have simply set out to translate Homer and Pushkin.

During that process of importation, distribution, and use, Russia produced a number of writers who in turn have come to be regarded as classic. If the classics of antiquity are truly such an inexhaustible source of inspiration, one is inclined to presume that the ancient classics will have left their mark on the work of the new Russian classics. Indeed, the more highly one esteems the value of the ancient classics, the more one is inclined to think that the work of the new classics could never have been written without those shining examples from antiquity. Further investigation shows that this is by no means always the case. To put it differently: the claims of some admirers of antiquity can be largely put down to occupational blindness. This does not alter the fact that there was certainly some degree of fertilization. It can, for instance, be said that Gogol could never have written *Dead Souls* as he did if he had never read Homer (in translation).

To my knowledge, the reception of the ancient classics, of the education in the classical languages, and of the translations from Greek and Latin in the work of the new classics has never been investigated for Russian literature in a systematic-historical way, i.e. in relation to the social context. This probably has to do with

the fact that Slavists usually know little about the literature of antiquity, and with the fact that classicists usually know little about Russian literature. To say nothing of the ahistorical nature of much literary theory and literary "history". There is another important fact: Western scholars mostly hold the view, perhaps unconsciously, that Russia has no room in the "Common House of Europe". This gives anyone attempting such a systematic-historical inquiry the pleasant feeling that he is entering a territory where something is still left to be done and discovered.

But it is also a vast territory. In view of its nature and possibilities, it would be regrettable to stop at a superficial exploration. To get to know a landscape well, it is better to travel through it by foot than by car. I have thus thought it advisable to split up the period of around 1700 to around 1950 (or 1990) into two halves. For an adequate and therefore somewhat detailed description of the entire period, a book of some 300 to 400 pages would not suffice. Fortunately, it is not difficult to draw a clear dividing line: that line is the year 1855, a year which was also a turning-point in Russian history in all kinds of other respects. 1855 is the year in which Nicholas I and several other main characters in this book died. It is also the year in which Russia's most famous classic writer, Leo Tolstoy, first drew literary attention to himself with his *Sketches from Sebastopol*.

In 1856 Russia saw the start of a period of *glasnost* (as a contemporary called it in his diary) and of Great Reforms—the *pere-stroika* of Czar Alexander II. This period came to an abrupt end after the Polish uprising of 1863 and the failed attempt on the Czar's life in 1866. The events of that period and of the following years had a profound impact on the further history of the cultural function of (the education in) the ancient classics in Russia and—in connection with that—of the social position of the Russian classical scholars. This function and this position became subjects of heated debate as the twentieth century drew closer. The successful *coup d'état* by Lenin which is now known as the Great October Revolution put an end to that discussion and effectively reduced a whole generation of classical scholars to silence.

The Russian classics of the twentieth century are all exiles or dissidents. It is in these circles, in poets like Anna Akhmatova and Marina Tsvetaeva, Aleksandr Blok and Osip Mandelshtam, Jozef Brodsky and even Irina Ratushinskaya (born in 1954!), that

the influence of the ancient classics has remained visible to every observant reader. How all this could have happened is a different story, a different book. That book still has to be written, and this book is a prelude to it.

The Russian classics of the nineteenth century have long since given Russia, the old pre-revolution Russia, a place in the Common House of Europe. The classics of the twentieth century, the exiles and dissidents, have only enlarged and strengthened that place for the new Russia. *Russia is Europe.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### IMPERATOR PETER THE GREAT

On May 16 1703, not far from the place where, two weeks before, Russian troops had captured the small Swedish garrison of Nyenschanz in the Neva estuary, the czar personally initiated the construction of St Petersburg, the city of Peter the Great. A fort, a church, a house for the czar, a café: these were the first results of what many considered to be an insane enterprise. Peter himself called his new city his paradise; for the builders, however, it was to prove a mass grave, and for the first inhabitants a barren desert. In November 1703 the first ship, with Peter himself at the helm, was piloted into the new harbour. It was—and how could it be otherwise?—a Dutch merchant. Indeed, the captain was an old acquaintance of the czar from the time he had worked as a shipwright in Zaandam. The captain and the crew were given a warm Russian welcome and rewarded, the ship was rechristened *Sint-Petersburg*.<sup>1</sup>

In 1712, despite vehement protests from Moscow and the Kremlin, the new city was solemnly proclaimed the new residence. That decision could only be revoked after the abdication of the last czar, Nicholas II, in 1917. In 1725, the year of Czar Peter's death, St Petersburg numbered 40,000 inhabitants according to some estimates, 75,000 according to others. At that time nobody had yet thought of calling the city "the Palmyra of the North". Nor was there any reason to do so at the time.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> V. Klyuchevsky, *Peter the Great*, translated by Liliana Archibald, New York 1958, p. 155; R. Wittram, *Peter I. Czar und Kaiser. Zur Geschichte Peters des Grossen in seiner Zeit*, 2 vols., Göttingen 1964, ii p. 61-62; R.K. Massie, *Peter the Great. His Life and World*, New York 1980, p. 365 and 358. Paradise: see for instance *Pisma i bumagi Petra Velikogo*, 11 vols., St Petersburg/Leningrad 1887-1962, iv p. 207 and 368; x p. 57; more on this subject: Stephen L. Baehr, "In the Beginning: Rebirth, Renewal and Renovatio in Eighteenth-Century Russia", in: A.G. Cross (ed.), *Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century*, Newtonville, Mass., 1983, p. 152-166, esp. 153.

<sup>2</sup> See Laurence Kelly, *St Petersburg, A Traveller's Companion*, London 1981, Fragments 1-4, p. 43-53; the name Palmyra of the North dates from the time of Catherine the Great; cf. Christopher Marsden, *Palmyra of the North*, London 1942, esp. p. 45-79; number of inhabitants: M.S. Anderson, *Peter the*

Palmyra, the luxurious caravan town in the desert of Syria, one of the most beautiful and most imaginatively appealing towns of the Roman Empire, was still virtually unknown in Europe around 1700. The oldest known painting of Palmyra, a vast canvass, dates from 1693 and now hangs in the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam.

All those who have occupied themselves with the history of Russia acknowledge the radical significance of the founding of St Petersburg. There are a number of reasons for beginning a description of the classical tradition in Russia in this same period.

However, before further discussing how Czar and shipwright Peter the Great's experiences in Amsterdam were relevant to the birth of a classical tradition in Russia, we first have to make a detour.

The summer of 1890. The Russian archaeologist Mikhail Alekseevich Venevitinov buys a booklet in Amsterdam entitled: *Discours sur le premier voyage de Pierre le Grand, principalement en Hollande, par Mr. J. Meerman, comte de l'empire et sénateur à Paris, 1812*. Seven years later, Venevitinov publishes in Moscow a book entitled: *Russkie v Gollandii, Velikoe posolstvo 1697-1698 g.* The book on the Russians in Holland is beautifully printed in octavo, with many engravings and other pictures. It appeared exactly two centuries after Czar Peter's famous journey to the Netherlands and was applauded as one of the best books, both in conception and execution, of the last ten years.<sup>3</sup> Now, almost a century later, it is forgotten, at least in the West. In the modern monographs on Peter the Great it is either ignored or mentioned only in passing.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, prior to 1897 people had also written about Peter the Great and his sojourn in Holland, which had mainly been a sojourn in Amsterdam.<sup>5</sup> But up till then they had exclusively based themselves on Scheltema's four volumes dealing with Russia and the Netherlands, a rather uncritical work.<sup>6</sup> Owing to

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*Great*, London 1978, p. 121 mentions a number of 40.000.

<sup>3</sup> A.I. Kirpichnikov in: *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya* 339 (1902), *sovremennaya letopis*, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Only mentioned by B. Raptshinsky, *Peter de Groote in Holland in 1697-1698, een historische schets*, Amsterdam 1925, and Wittram ii p. 428 n. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Wittram i, p. 152-157; Massie, p. 178-189.

<sup>6</sup> N.G. Ustryalov, *Istoriya tsarstvovaniya Petra Velikago*, 3 vols., St Petersburg 1858; S.M. Solovyov, *Istoriya Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, xiii-xv; J.

his discovery of Meerman's pamphlet, Venevitinov was able to broaden and substantially correct the existing picture. His discovery also inspired him to carry out further investigations, though this was not in itself the most important thing. Venevitinov was more original in that he wrote a book which was not about Peter the Great, but about the first face-to-face encounter between two cultures, between the Russian culture before Peter the Great's reforms and the Dutch culture of the Golden Age, which was making an impression throughout Western Europe at that time. But it was above all his approach to this subject which showed his originality. Up till then Russians had only written about the encounter between East and West in vaguely philosophical and speculative dissertations in the context of the debate between Slavophiles and Westerners, the *zapadniki*. Venevitinov was the first to address this topical issue with the instruments of thorough scientific analysis based on a meticulous investigation of the smallest details. In doing so he showed himself to be a real *faktopoklonnik*, an "adorer of the facts".

*Faktopoklonstvo*, "adoration of the facts", was an essential characteristic of the philological and historical and above all archaeological research in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Underlying this empirical-positivistic view of science was the idea that progress in science could only be the result of (the processing of) more source material. Theoretical discussions were liable to be regarded as a form of subjectivism. Archaeologists in particular, it was believed, did not need to formulate theoretical principles. They had their material, usually modest and unpretentious testimonies of the past. But because this material was utterly lacking in pretensions, it was also free from arbitrary selection and for that very reason an ideal basis for strictly scientific research. Although the data unearthed by this research might often seem insignificant, they were at least irrefutable and free from any prejudice and the conclusions drawn from them were therefore lasting and unshakable. Let historians explain the past (they never agree among themselves anyway), archaeo-

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Scheltema, *Rusland en de Nederlanden beschouwd in derzelver wederkeerige betrekkingen*, 4 vols., Amsterdam 1817-1819; id., *Anecdotes historiques sur Pierre le Grand et sur ses voyages en Hollande et à Zaandam*, Lausanne 1842.

<sup>7</sup> M.A. Wes, *Michael Rostoutzeff, Historian in Exile*, Stuttgart 1990, p. 72-73.

logists still have the final say in the matter, since they make the past visible and tangible to us: they bring the truth to light. This is roughly how a reviewer of Venevitinov's book, Professor Aleksandr Ivanovich Kirpichnikov of the University of Odessa, motivates his enthusiasm.<sup>8</sup>

He adds a second argument, the argument of what he calls the "democratic character" (*demokratichnost*) of archaeology. To obtain new facts by any other method than archaeology, he explains, requires long and serious preparations. One has to learn languages, one has to learn how to deal with sources, one has to go a long way before one can be included in the "priestly caste". But once that point has been reached, one starts to behave—this is the fate of priests—according to the norms of the caste and one settles into conservatism. By contrast, archaeology is a young science which is reluctant to be adventurous, and rarely is. Anybody who is diligent and uses his common sense can discover valuable facts of detail, and the more a hard worker is free from preconceived systems and theories, the more useful his results are. "Hence in Russia we have countless amateurs working in the field of archaeology, who with honour visit our provincial museums and attend our archaeological congresses", according to the archaeologist Kirpichnikov in a lecture to the Moscow Archaeological Society on 27 November 1901. His words were received with attention and approval.

It is beyond my scope to talk long about the contents of Venevitinov's book on the Russians in Holland. Suffice it to say that the author showed commendable patience and assiduity in collecting all kinds of data on what Dutch products were sold at what prices and transported to Russia, and which practitioners of what trades were persuaded on what conditions to enter Russian employment. In short, the data were concerned with how the Russians gave concrete shape to the Europeanization of their own culture which they so evidently desired.

The most directly visible result of the 1697-1698 journey, Venevitinov concludes, was the founding of St Petersburg, with its canals and drawbridges and its Admiralty built after the example of Amsterdam, and referring to Holland even in its original

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<sup>8</sup> Kirpichnikov, p. 92.



name, St Petersburg.<sup>9</sup> "Russia joined the circle of European powers under the flag of Dutch civilization."<sup>10</sup>

It goes without saying that this Dutch civilization included a classical component. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are also the period of the *virī antiquarii*, the men of wealth who were prompted either by scientific curiosity or considerations of prestige or a combination of these two factors to collect antiquities—coins, inscriptions, and various other products of the material culture of antiquity—and to write learned discourses on and exchange letters about their treasures. They eagerly received reports of archaeological discoveries in the world of antiquity. The rediscovery of Palmyra some years before the arrival of Peter the Great in Holland in August 1697 is only one, albeit spectacular, example.

This rediscovery was first made known to a broader public in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the London Royal Society. Coincidentally, that happened in 1697 as well. Only then was the account published of two journeys which a group of Englishmen had made from Aleppo to Palmyra. The first journey had already taken place in 1678; in 1691 a party of Englishmen had again travelled from Aleppo to Palmyra. This party included an artist called G. Hofsted van Essen, of whom virtually nothing more is known. What we do know is that through the agency of the Dutch Consul in Aleppo, Coenraet Calckberner, the same Hofsted van Essen was already making a large painting of the ruins of Palmyra for Gisbert Cuper in 1692. Gisbert Cuper (1644-1716) was a regent from Overijssel who was born in Gelderland. From 1668 to 1681 he had been "Professor historiarum et eloquentiae" at the Illustre School in Deventer. He is regarded as the scholar who made the greatest reputation for himself in Dutch archaeology in the second half of the seventeenth century. From 1681 to 1694 Cuper was the representative of the States of Overijssel to the States General. In that period he usually resided in The Hague.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Rapschinsky, p. 159.

<sup>10</sup> M.A. Venevitinov, *Russkie v Gollandii. Velikoe posolstvo 1697-1698 g.*, St Petersburg 1897, p. 198.

<sup>11</sup> A.J. Veenendaal, *Het dagboek van Gisbert Cuper, gedeputeerde te velde, gehouden in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden in 1706*, The Hague 1935, p. 35; Lucian Müller, *Geschichte der klassischen Philologie in den Niederlanden*, Leipzig 1869, p. 20f.

In May 1693 Hofsted van Essen's painting, together with an English account of the 1691 journey, was shipped to Amsterdam and subsequently came into Cuper's possession.<sup>12</sup> The painting was given a place of honour in his burgomaster's residence in the Grote Kerkhof in Deventer. After being auctioned in Amsterdam in 1718, two years after Cuper's death, it was presented by Gerardus van Papenbroeck as a gift to the Athenaeum Illustre, the predecessor of the University of Amsterdam.<sup>13</sup>

It seems very likely that Peter the Great already heard about Palmyra during his first stay in Amsterdam in the autumn of 1697. For Nicholas Witsen, as burgomaster of Amsterdam and visitor to Moscow effectively the czar's host during his stay in Holland, was also a man with great antiquarian interests, who maintained a regular correspondence on this subject with Cuper, then burgomaster of Deventer. Another prominent correspondent with Cuper was Jacob de Wilde, Collector-General at the Admiralty in Amsterdam. He too must have been aware of the rediscovery of Palmyra via Cuper.<sup>14</sup>

Jacob de Wilde was also the proud owner of a rich antiquarian collection of coins, cut stones, sculptures, and other antique art objects. Peter saw the collection at least once in late 1697. He himself recorded the date in a note in de Wilde's album (in Russian): 13 December 1697 Old Style.<sup>15</sup> It was the first visit by a Russian czar to an antiquarian collection, and this date could be called the beginning of the West European classical tradition in Russia.

It would be wrong to say that Peter was deeply impressed by what Jacob de Wilde showed him. He was more interested in new things and in fact spent considerably more time in the workshop of father and son van der Heyden, the inventors of the

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<sup>12</sup> A. Hotz, "Over afbeeldingen van Persepolis en Palmyra door Nederlanders", in: *Oud-Holland, Nieuwe Bijdragen over de Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Kunst, Letterkunde, Nijverheid enz.*, 29 (1911), p. 25-34; the manuscript of the travel-record is in the archives of the Royal Library in The Hague (number of signature: 72C3).

<sup>13</sup> Hotz, p. 32 n. 1.

<sup>14</sup> See the catalogue of the Cuperus papers in the Royal Library in The Hague.

<sup>15</sup> *Pisma i bumagi* i, St Petersburg 1887, N. 212, p. 227; Raptshinsky, p. 124; Scheltema, ii p. 220; on Jacob de Wilde see A.J. van der Aa, *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden* xx, Haarlem 1877, p. 199-200.

fire hose.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, twenty years later, in 1717, he again stayed in Amsterdam for four months and again visited the collection of de Wilde, this time more than once. During one of these visits he was presented with a catalogue of de Wilde's collection of sculptures. This catalogue had been published in 1703. Its frontispiece is an engraving depicting Jacob de Wilde in conversation with a young man in Russian attire. The coat of arms with the two-headed eagle at the young man's feet shows that it is a depiction of the meeting between Czar Peter and Jacob de Wilde in 1697. Thus the beginning of the West European classical tradition in Russia was also visually recorded.<sup>17</sup>

Jacob de Wilde had a daughter named Maria.<sup>18</sup> In 1697 she was fifteen years old, too young to make an impression on Peter. In 1717 this was different. By then she had developed into a many-talented woman, who could not only make music, paint, and write poetry, but also made excellent etchings and engravings. She compiled the catalogue of 1703 and also made the engraving of the meeting between her father and the czar in 1697. That did make an impression on Peter, who during his first stay had also applied himself to the art of etching and engraving. Two Dutch engravers, Adriaan Schoonebeek and Pierre Picard, even followed him to Russia. Schoonebeek had been the teacher of Maria de Wilde and Peter in Amsterdam, Picard became the teacher of Aleksei Ivanovich Rostovtsev in St Petersburg. The latter worked as an engraver in a printing-office in the new capital from 1711 to at least 1726. There he made copperplates of landscapes, portraits of famous contemporaries, and other book illustrations. Examples of his work are preserved in the Hermitage in Leningrad. Although he also made a portrait of Peter the Great, Aleksei Rostovtsev has now passed into total oblivion.<sup>19</sup>

Here we must particularly mention the contact between Peter and the Thesingh brothers. This contact led to one of the most

<sup>16</sup> Scheltema ii, p. 221.

<sup>17</sup> *Signa Antiqua e Museo Jacobi de Wilde per Mariam filiam aeri inscripta*, Amsterdam 1700; P. Pekarsky, *Nauka i literatura v Rossii pri Petre Velikom*, 2 vols., St Petersburg 1862 (reprint Leipzig 1972), vol. i, p. 8-9.

<sup>18</sup> On Maria see Van der Aa, xx, p. 200.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. D.A. Rovinsky, *Podrobny slovar russkikh gravirovannykh portretov*, iii, St Petersburg 1888, col. 1428 no. 543; col. 1467 no. 652; col. 1504ff.; id., *Podrobny slovar russkikh graverov*, St Petersburg 1895, col. 69-84; 518-528; 561-564; 787-794; Pekarsky i, p. 8 and 345; ii, p. 434f.; Marsden, p. 59.

interesting results of Peter's stay in Holland: in 1698 the printing-office of Jan Thesingh was commissioned to publish Russian translations of European books for the Russian market. The translations were supplied by a Polish Ukrainian, Ilya Fyodorovich Kopievsky. The Thesingh-Kopievsky team brought together by Peter is regarded by some modern researchers as the first impulse towards modern Russian book production. Thus Thesingh published the first reasonably accurate map of the Ukraine and the Black Sea area as early as 1699. It was the first step towards realizing the czar's plan to chart his entire empire.<sup>20</sup>

Thesingh did not need to confine himself to this kind of useful printed matter. Peter's stimulation of Russian book production and translating activity was also beneficial to history and archeology. The first Russian book to be printed in Jan Thesingh's printing-office was a "Concise Introduction to General History" by Kopievsky (1699). A year later, in 1700, other books by Kopievsky were published: a Latin grammar (in Latin, with a Russian translation), two small dictionaries (one Russian-Latin-Dutch, the other Russian-Latin-German), an edition of "Aesop's Fables" in Latin and Russian, after the metrical version by the late Roman poet Avianus, in combination with an edition of the *Batrachomyomachia*, the "War of the Frogs and the Mice", a parody—in antiquity attributed to Homer—of the *Iliad*. Kopievsky was apparently very fond of such fables: in 1699 he had already published part of the material as an appendix to his "Short and Useful Introduction to Arithmetic". The translation from 1700 was reprinted twice in Russia: 1712 in Moscow and 1717 in St Petersburg, so in both cases still in Peter's lifetime.<sup>21</sup> The Mecklenburg ambassador Friedrich Christian Weber also mentioned in his memoirs from 1721 that Peter was very familiar with Aesop's fables and on occasion would refer to them.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Cf. M.M. Bogoslovsky, *Petr I: Materialy dlya biografii*, 5 vols., Moscow 1940-1948, vol. iv, p. 294ff.; Anderson, p. 114f.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. E.D. Frolov, *Russkaya istoriografiya antichnosti (do serediny xix v.)*, Leningrad 1967, p. 41-48; for a complete list of all Russian books published between 1698 and 1725 see Pekarsky ii; the book on Russian printing and publishing: Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700-1800*, Princeton 1985. The introduction to arithmetic: I. Kopievsky, *Kratkoe i poleznoe rukovenie v arifmetiku*, Amsterdam 1699.

<sup>22</sup> F.Chr. Weber, *Das veränderte Russland*, Frankfurt 1721, quoted by Pekarsky i, p. 22f.

In 1707 a new type from Holland was introduced in Russia. The old Cyrillic script was modernized, and what Thesingh had first done in Amsterdam now took place in Moscow and St Petersburg under the direction of an old companion of Peter on his journey to Holland, Avramov. (Later Avramov, after reading Christiaan Huygens, came to regard his printing and publishing activities as evil promptings of the devil and was subsequently deported to Siberia.)<sup>23</sup> In 1709, at Peter's initiative, a revised translation of Curtius Rufus' history of Alexander the Great was published. It was the first work of a classical Latin author to be printed and translated in Russian. In 1711 an anthology of Julius Caesar's writings followed.<sup>24</sup> The *Strategemata* of Frontinus, a Roman officer from the first century A.D., was very rapidly made available to Russian readers, obviously, given the subject, in the first place for Peter himself (remarkably, the translation of this work already dates from 1692). Of typographical interest is the publication in St Petersburg in 1722 of a book with illustrations—several by Aleksei Rostovtsev—of the characters from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (without a text!).<sup>25</sup>

On account of these activities Russian classicists concluded that the beginning of the history of classical philology in Russia coincided with the initiatives of Peter the Great.<sup>26</sup>

The archaeologists held the same opinion. True enough, N.I. Veselovsky stated on the first page of his historical survey of Russian archaeology from 1900 that archaeology did not achieve scientific status until the second half of the nineteenth century, after 1846 to be exact, but he wrote this in a book which owed its conception to the celebration in 1896 of the fiftieth anniversary of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society.<sup>27</sup> For him the early

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Massie, p. 391f. and 429. Avramov: A.N. Pypin, "Pervoe vremya posle Petra Velikago", *Vestnik Evropy* 1895, i, p. 282-287, mentioned by S. Blanc, "L'église russe à l'aube du 'Siècle des Lumières'", *Annales E.S.C.* 20 (1965), p. 449.

<sup>24</sup> Pekarsky ii, p. 217 and i, p. 232; D.I. Naguevsky, *Bibliografiya po istorii rimskoi literatury v Rossii s 1709 po 1889*, Kazan 1889.

<sup>25</sup> *Ovidieni figuri v 226 izobrazheniakh*, St Petersburg 1722.

<sup>26</sup> P.N. Chernyaev, "Puti proniknoveniya v Rossiya svedenii ob abtichnom mire v svyazi s kratkoi kharakteristikoi lits, prolavavshikh eti puti", *Filologicheskie Zapiski* (Voronezh) 1910, no. 6, p. 858ff.; criticized by A.I. Maletin, "K istorii klassicheskoi filologii v Rossii", *Germes* 1911, no. 7, p. 163f.

<sup>27</sup> N.I. Veselovsky, *Istoriya Imperatorskago Russkago Arkheologicheskago Obshchestva za pervoe pyatidesyatiletie ego sushchestvovaniya 1846-1896*, St Petersburg 1900.

history of Russian archaeology starts with Peter the Great, not on account of his visits to the antiquarian collection of Jacob de Wilde (whom he does not mention), but on account of a *ukaz* from 1718, in which the czar laid down that all finders of unusual objects, stones, bones, weapons, utensils, and so on were to be rewarded.<sup>28</sup> It is perhaps no coincidence, and in any case remarkable, that this regulation was issued immediately after Peter's second stay (1717) in Western Europe (when he visited Paris as well as Amsterdam). The rewards were sometimes far from negligible, which is all the more remarkable, says Veselovsky, considering that the government tended to operate very frugally in other spheres (unfortunately he does not mention the value of the rewards, how often they were given, and for what finds).

Furthermore, Peter expressly asked the explorer Daniël Gottlieb Messerschmidt and other learned travellers to look out for archaeological artefacts during their travels through the Russian empire. Together with the rewarded finds and everything that had been bought in Western Europe, these artefacts would then be given a place in the Chamber of Arts which Peter had established in his new residence after the example of the same name in Dresden.<sup>29</sup> Among the curiosities already given a place there during Peter's reign were a few elephant's teeth, found near Voronezh, which persuaded Peter that Alexander the Great had been there, and relics, including texts on parchment in an unknown language, which were said to originate from a pagan temple near the Caspian Sea.<sup>30</sup>

Veselovsky's honourable mention of Peter was repeated by Zhebelev, who published a short history of archaeology in 1923 in which he emphasized the importance of Peter's second journey to Western Europe (1717) for the creation of the antiquarian collection of the Russian Chamber of Arts.<sup>31</sup> The Chamber of Arts had originally been set up as a collection forming part of the Academy of Sciences which Peter had also founded. In the course of the eighteenth century the organizational unity of the Chamber of

<sup>28</sup> Veselovsky, p. 12; the *ukaz* in: *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov*, vol. v, 3159.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Wittram i, p. 162; Massie, p. 217f. and 814.

<sup>30</sup> Massie, p. 815 (no source mentioned).

<sup>31</sup> S.A. Zhebelev, *Vvedenie v arkheologiyu*, vol. i, *Istoriya arkheologicheskogo znaniya*, Petrograd 1923, p. 101; cf. P.S. Uvarova, "Aperçu sommaire du développement des sciences archéologiques en Russie", *Recueil de Mémoires par la Société des antiquaires de France à l'occasion de son centenaire*, Paris 1904.

Arts and the Academy of Sciences came to an end and around the middle of the nineteenth century the collection was housed in the Hermitage, but in 1910 the original unity was restored and the collection was again placed under the patronage of the Academy of Sciences as one of the departments of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography.<sup>32</sup> This restoration of the old situation is in itself suggestive of Peter the Great's image at the turn of the century. He was widely regarded as the man who had ushered in a new era.

The totally new and revolutionary nature of Peter's rule has since then been questioned from various quarters. It has almost become a commonplace to remark that the image of Peter's reign as the sudden transition from the darkness of barbarity to the light of civilization cannot be maintained.<sup>33</sup> Throughout the seventeenth century there had already been intensive trade relations between Russia and Holland. In the third decade of that century arms were manufactured on a fairly large scale in Russia in a workshop set up by Dutch experts in Tula. In 1648 in what seemed at the time to be a dangerous situation Czar Aleksei considered putting his bodyguard under the command of a Dutch prefect. In the nineties there were more than three hundred Dutchmen alone on a total of more than a thousand foreign merchants. Germany also contributed significantly, and of course—in particular in a cultural respect—Poland and the Ukraine as well, especially after the seventeenth-century expansion of Russian territory had made Kiev a Russian city in 1667. Czar Aleksei had a new throne made after a Polish design, with an inscription in Latin. Hundreds of Polish books were translated into Russian.<sup>34</sup>

The Ukrainian Simeon Polotsky (1629-1680), in his time the greatest scholar of Russia and closely associated with Czar Aleksei and his family, came to Moscow in 1664. Simeon Polotsky was the first in Russia to express in his work the idea of the state as an institution which has its origin not only in the will of God, but also in the natural human need to create a social community,

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<sup>32</sup> Zhebelev, p. 101-102 n. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Anderson, p. 170; Klyuchevsky, p. 247-272; N.V. Riasanovsky, *The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought*, Oxford 1985.

<sup>34</sup> Anderson, p. 19-24; J.H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe. An Interpretive History of Russian Culture*, New York (Vintage) 1970, p. 110-114; 123; 148. Text of the inscription: *Potentissimo et Invictissimo Moscovitarum Imperatori Alexio*.

and, following naturally from that, the idea of the sovereign as a person who has been appointed by society and whose task is to ensure the security and well-being of the members of that society.<sup>35</sup>

Polotsky was a pioneer in various respects. He was the first to detach poetics from theology and he was the first to put his gift of eloquence in the service of a secular ruler as a court poet. In 1678 the first Russian printing press which was not under the supervision of the patriarch went into operation under his direction.

After his death his work was harmoniously continued by two of his pupils. One, Silvestr Medvedev, was unlucky enough to end up on the wrong side in the quarrel between Peter and his half-sister Sofiya Alekseevna. It led to his execution in 1691. The other, Karion Istomin, who, among other things, compiled a kind of encyclopedia in syllabic verses, which he called *Polis*, was more or less able to continue his work as the head of Polotsky's printing-office, as an author of school books, as a translator of Latin literature, and as a headmaster. In short, under Peter the Great there was a process of forced and accelerated evolution rather than a real revolution.

But if that is the case, is there any reason to represent the beginning of the classical tradition in Russia as something less abrupt than I have done in the preceding pages? The answer is yes, and it is important to discuss this briefly in order to present a clearer picture of another contemporary of Peter, his "ideologist" Feofan Prokopovich. Prokopovich is in fact more important for the establishment of the classical tradition in Russia than Peter the Great. This is bound up with his cultural and intellectual background and its history.

One could start the description of the cultural relations between Russia and the rest of Europe in the period before Peter the Great at an apparently paradoxical moment: the point in time when Grand Duke Ivan III subjected Novgorod to Moscow in 1478.<sup>36</sup> In

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<sup>35</sup> A.S. Lappo-Danilevsky, "Ideya gosudarstvo i glavneishie momenty eya razvitiya v Rossii, so vremeni smuty i do epokhi preobrazovaniya", *Golos Minuvshago* 1914, No. 12, p. 5-38; French version of the same article: "L'idée de l'état et son évolution en Russie depuis les troubles du xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'aux réformes du xviii<sup>e</sup>", in: P. Vinogradoff (ed.), *Essays in Legal History read before the International Congress of Historical Studies held in London*, Oxford 1913.

<sup>36</sup> Billington, part ii ch. 2, "The Coming of the West", and part iii ch.2, "The Westward Turn"; cf. G. Stökl, *Russische Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1973, p. 196f.



that year the *vechevoi kolokol*, the "bell of the *veche*", eloquent symbol of the freedom of republican Novgorod, was transferred to Moscow. Thus the bell was silenced which had always rung to call on the citizens of the city-state to decide on matters of common interest in their popular assembly (*veche*).<sup>37</sup>

History may be said to have repeated itself: yet again a democracy had been murdered. Just as 1800 years before, in 322/321 B.C., the classical Athenian democracy of some 175 years was murdered by a Macedonian king, so in 1478 the democracy of Novgorod, probably twice as old, was murdered by a Russian grand duke. The other democracy on Russian soil, that of Novgorod's "satellite city" (*prigorod*) Pskov, suffered the same fate. In 1494 the office of the Hanse was closed in Novgorod. An iron curtain descended. At least that is how it seemed.

The parallel was distinctly impressed upon the Russian students thirsting for democracy at the turn of the century. We need only to quote Aleksandr Kerensky (1881-1970), Prime Minister of the Provisional Government in the calamitous year of 1917, who was driven out of the Winter Palace by the *coup d'état* of Lenin and his associates. In his youth Kerensky read history and law at the University of St Petersburg. Reminiscing about the lectures which he attended, he nostalgically describes how "Professor Michael I. Rostovtzeff, who was still very young at the time, ... thrilled us with his accounts of the Greek towns that flourished on the Black Sea before the birth of Rus (Ancient Russia). His lectures on this pre-Russian world in the south of Russia clearly demonstrated that the roots of democracy in Ancient Rus went back much farther than had been thought, and that there was some connection between early Russian statecraft and the ancient Greek republics". On the same page, talking about the education in ancient Russian history, he writes: "... S.F. Platonov ... was very popular among the students. ... He took us on a series of excursions, first to Pskov and then to Novgorod, where he explained the organization of the ancient Russian democracy that had flourished there".<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Stökl, p. 83f., 150ff., 196f., 204; Billington, p. 81f.; M. Szeftel, "La participation des assemblées populaires dans le gouvernement central de la Russie depuis l'époque kiévienne jusqu'à la fin du xviie siècle", *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin* 25 (1965), p. 339-345.

<sup>38</sup> A.F. Kerensky, *The Kerensky Memoirs, Russia and History's Turning Point*, London 1965, p. 30.

The quotation reminds one of a remark by Sacheverell Sitwell in the preface to Christopher Marsden's book on the founding of St Petersburg. He calls this founding "an awakening of the Russian idiom" and explains this as follows: "The awakening, and not the birth, because, of course, the Russian idiom speaks in unmistakable accents out of the darkness of the early tomb mounds. Greek craftsmen fashioned many of the silver cups and bowls from the Crimea, now in the Hermitage, but their works, in the aggregate, record the primitive era of the Slavs. And this accent or tingeing of a foreign importation is typical of Russia".<sup>39</sup>

Opinions on the truly democratic nature of the republic of Novgorod are divided. But scholars agree on two points: the *veche* of Novgorod goes directly back to the golden age of Kiev, which was "murdered" by the Tartars in 1240, and is antithetical to all autocratic traditions, in this case those of Byzantium and Muscovy. In this way Novgorod forms the link between Kiev and St Petersburg as the cosmopolitan opponent of Moscow and the cradle of a revolutionary movement which based itself on universalism, natural law, and rationalism.

The West came nonetheless, despite the demise of free Novgorod. The West: at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries this meant "the Latins", *latinstvo*. Syphilis, first recorded in Russia in the last decade of the fifteenth century, came to be known in Russian as "the Latin disease". The name indicates anti-Latin sentiment and thus Latin influence. *Latinstvo* was moreover associated with Novgorod. It led to Moscow's first large-scale deportation of Baltic citizens.<sup>40</sup> This was to be of no avail. In the same fifteenth century the medical writings of Galen and Hippocrates were translated into Russian. Doctors read the occult *Secreta Secretorum*, a work regarded as containing the secrets which Aristotle supposedly revealed to Alexander the Great.<sup>41</sup>

The middle of the sixteenth century is the period of the first group of Russians—only four names will be mentioned—who showed interest in classical antiquity.<sup>42</sup> They might be called the

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<sup>39</sup> S. Sitwell, in Marsden, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Billington, p. 84ff.; A.N. Popov, *Istoriko-literaturnyi obzor drevne-russkikh polemicheskikh sochinenii protiv latinyan (xi-xv v.)*, Moscow 1875.

<sup>41</sup> Billington, p. 87; D. Chizhevsky, *History of Russian Literature from the Eleventh Century to the End of the Baroque*, The Hague 1962, p. 161.

<sup>42</sup> Billington, p. 89ff.

Russian echo of European Humanism. The oldest was not actually a Russian, but a Greek monk from Arta in Epirus: Maksim Grek (ca 1471-1556). His real name was Mikhail Trivolis. After first having spent years in Renaissance Italy, he moved, at the request of Grand Duke Vasily III Ivanovich, from his monastery on Mount Athos to Moscow in 1518, ten years after Raphael completed his *School of Athens*. The move was a permanent one: he was not allowed to return. In Moscow he was very active, together with his friend Dmitry Gerasimov, as a translator of Greek and Latin texts, sacred texts to be precise: Humanism in an orthodox Christian guise. But he was also the man who acquainted Russians with the news of the recently discovered New World, and—via the pupils which surrounded him, both monks and laymen—with the newness of the Old World of the classics, in particular Aristotle's philosophy, which he opposed, and Plato's philosophy, which he praised following the contemporary model of the Medici vogue in the Florentine Neoplatonic academy of Lorenzo il Magnifico, Marsiglio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. Like these philosophers, Maksim Grek saw no anti-thesis between Humanism and the church. In 1492—Columbus discovers America—Pico della Mirandola and the Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola stood side by side at the deathbed of Lorenzo il Magnifico. In view of his background, it is no surprise that Maksim Grek felt mainly attracted to Savonarola. Although his end was not as dramatic as that of his confrère in Florence, he was more than once charged with heresy on account his emendations of texts regarded as sacred, and his unremittent exhortations against wealth and corruption and his crusades for truth and honesty ensured that he effectively died in captivity.<sup>43</sup>

Some years later supporters and followers of Maksim Grek went into voluntary or enforced exile. Special mention must be made of his pupil Prince Andrei Mikhailovich Kurbsky (1528-1583). His flight to Lithuania in 1564 was a most spectacular event, since he had hitherto been a confidant of Ivan IV the Terrible and, as one of his best generals at that moment, was commander-

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. on Maksim Grek Billington, p. 663-664, n. 55-74; B. Schultze, *Maksim Grek als Theologe*, Rome 1963; Chizhevsky, p. 291-300, esp. 299 (much less positive than Billington); A. Langelier, *Maksim Grek*, Amsterdam 1986.

in-chief of the Russian troops who, with Dorpat as headquarters, were disputing the supremacy over the Baltic territories with Lithuania. He now became the leader of the boyars in their opposition to the czar. The beginning of Ivan's pathological distrust of his environment and the terror of his rule have been directly linked by later historians to Kurbsky's flight. The name Kurbsky is above all remembered for the so-called "correspondence" between him and Ivan IV from the years 1564-1579: what one saw as the inalienable right of freedom was for the other bare-faced treachery, what one saw as a form of intolerable tyranny was for the other the only form of monarchy sanctioned by divine grace.<sup>44</sup>

It is less well-known that Kurbsky used the years of his exile in the Polish-Lithuanian conglomerate to master the much more Western culture of his new environment. He had already become acquainted with Plato in Greek through Maksim Grek. Now he became acquainted with Cicero in Latin through the Latin University of Krakow, and he incorporated this new knowledge in his correspondence with Ivan IV by inserting a Russian translation of Cicero's *Paradoxa* IV and VI. *Paradoxon* IV—the first Ciceronian idea with which a czar was confronted, and a confrontation it truly was—argues that an enforced exile cannot be considered a just punishment: ... *pulsus ego civitate non sum, quae nulla erat*, "I was not driven out of the state, for there no longer was a state after a pack of bandits under your leadership had seized power", *te duce latrocinium in foro constitutum*, etcetera. In Cicero the addressee is Clodius, in Kurbsky it is Ivan Grozny, "the Terrible".

The two final spokesmen of sixteenth-century Russian Humanism are Chancellor Fyodor Ivanovich Karpov and the monk Ermolai-Erazm. Billington writes of the former: "He consciously strove to write with 'Homeric eloquence' in a pleasing, grammatical 'non-barbaric' way. His few surviving compositions reveal subtlety of intellect as well as considerable style and a sense of irony and concern for moral order. This latter quality bordered on the subversive in Muscovy, for it led him to conclude that

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<sup>44</sup> H. von Rimscha, *Geschichte Russlands*, Darmstadt 1970, p. 187; J.L.I. Fennell (ed.), *The Correspondence between Prince A.M. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV of Russia 1564-1579*, 1955; E.L. Keenan, *The Kurbskii-Groznyi Apocrypha. The Seventeenth Century Genesis of the 'Correspondence' attributed to Prince A.M. Kurbskii and Tsar Ivan IV*, 1971.

moral laws were higher than the will of the sovereign". Karpov was convinced that the monastic ideal of "long-suffering" could offer no solution to a society which was not based on a generally accepted legal order, and he therefore took a gloomy view of the future. The monk Ermolai-Erazm (from Pskov) shared this pessimism, but also argued for a substantial cut in the financial burden of farmers, and ingenuously suggested that the use of knives in street-fighting could be counteracted by prohibiting sharp points...<sup>45</sup>

In the seventeenth century the Polish-Lithuanian position of power was increasingly undermined and Belorussia and the Ukraine became part of the Russian empire. As a paradoxical consequence of this, however, the culture of those areas could exert its influence on that of the more barbarian Muscovy. Moreover, a curious coalition, or at least parallel, was produced. For as a result of the enforced conversion of East Europeans to the Church of Rome, flexibly but systematically pursued by the Order of Jesuits, the orthodox minorities in Eastern Poland started to follow the example of the Protestant minorities in their environment. They organized themselves in local and regional fraternities. These fraternities were characterized by a strong sense of the solidarity and equality of the members and by the conviction—both in orthodox and Protestant groups—that education and use of the printing press were indispensable in their resistance to the pope of Rome and his confederate King Sigismund III of Poland, who ruled from 1587 to 1632.

In various places fraternity schools were founded. Greek and Latin were also taught, since the dissenters did not wish to rely exclusively on the Jesuits and their schools for knowledge of the New Testament and the Church Fathers. Even colleges were founded: in 1632 in Estonia (then Swedish) the Lutheran University of Dorpat, successor of a former Jesuit school; in the same year 1632 in the Ukraine (then Polish) the orthodox Academy of Kiev, the first orthodox institution for higher education in Eastern

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<sup>45</sup> Billington, p. 90f.; Chizhevsky, p. 271-275. For a detailed and well-documented description of the intellectual relations between Renaissance Europe and Russia see N.V. Revunenkova, "Erasmé en Russie", *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 71 (1991), p. 129-156 (I am greatly indebted to Mr. A.V.N. van Woerden, Amsterdam, who kindly provided me with an off-print of this excellent and important article).

Europe. In 1632 two Dutchmen and a Frisian also built the first Russian arms factory in Tula south of Moscow. In 1647 the first Russian manual for the training of soldiers was printed (it was also the first Russian book with copperplates).<sup>46</sup> In 1667 Kiev became Russian, followed in 1704 by Dorpat. The Roman Catholic threat had been averted. Even apart from his personal interest in shipbuilding and navigation, it is not so strange that Peter the Great travelled to anti-Catholic Amsterdam in 1697 and went on to build his own Amsterdam in the Neva estuary. Kiev, the "mother of Russian cities", metropolis, and Petropolis, St Petersburg, its poor cousin, have more in common as symbols than it would seem at first sight.

The Academy of Kiev was founded by Pyotr Simeonovich Mohyla (1596-1647). It was his first act after he became Metropolitan of Kiev in 1632. In 1640 he proposed to Czar Mikhail that a similar kind of academy be founded in Moscow. The proposal was rejected for fear of Kiev's *latinstvo*.<sup>47</sup> It was already thought dubious that Mohyla, who, despite his anti-Catholic convictions, had nevertheless been profoundly influenced by the views of the Jesuits, had written a catechism in Latin. His critical attitude to various forms of irrational superstition also met with objections. Moreover, he was not a Russian, but a Moldavian, and in xenophobic Moscow this was hardly recommendable.

Mohyla refused to be discouraged. From about 1640 gradually increasing numbers of his pupils who had studied at the Academy of Kiev informally taught theology and the two classical languages in Moscow. For the fundamentalists under the leadership of the inspired Avvakum, the introduction of Latin was the clearest sign of the impending arrival of the Antichrist. This arrival was expected in the year 1667. Certainly 1667 was a most eventful year, but one thing that did not happen was the appearance of the Antichrist. In the end the fundamentalists were expelled from the church and Avvakum was burnt at the stake by order of Czar Fyodor Alekseevich.<sup>48</sup> That also explains the position of the Ukrainian Simeon Polotsky, the man who, as I mentioned

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<sup>46</sup> E. Hösch and H.-J. Grabmüller, *Daten der russischen Geschichte*, München 1981; Billington, p. 104-108.

<sup>47</sup> Stökl, p. 308.

<sup>48</sup> Billington, p. 141-144.

before, did succeed in getting the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy of Moscow off the ground.<sup>49</sup>

In 1667 Simeon Polotsky published a eulogy on Czar Aleksei: it was a genuine, almost classical panegyric, in which the czar was compared to Hercules, Alexander the Great, and the Roman Emperor Titus (in 1667 Racine compared Louis XIV with Titus in his *Bérénice*, but he had a very special reason for doing so). The absolutism of the sovereign's power was ideologically underpinned with arguments deriving from classical philosophy. Simeon Polotsky was also a champion of West European Baroque, with the entire cast of mythological figures led by Apollo, the Muses, and the Sibyls, in poetry, in painting, and in music. He is also one of the first promoters of the Russian theatre, together with the minister of the Lutheran Church in Moscow, Johann Gottfried Gregory, who treated the Moscow elite to the first secular theatre production, performed in an improvised court theatre in the summer residence Preobrazhenskoe, not very far from the place where St Petersburg would later spring up: a play about Artaxerxes, October 1672, three months after the birth of Peter the Great.<sup>50</sup> Shortly before, between 1666 and 1668, in Kolomenskoe, just outside Moscow, Aleksei built a palace that was conspicuous for the modernistic elements in its decor: a gigantic fresco representing the new heliocentric world view (which became known in Moscow through the Russian translation of the 1645 Amsterdam edition of Johannes Blaeu's *Theatrum orbis terrarum sive Atlas novus* and was explained there by an other Humanist from Kiev, Epifany Slavintsky) and instead of icons pictures of Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, and Darius.<sup>51</sup>

In short, it was a true cultural revolution, with antiquity and Latin as the flag-bearers of the new age.<sup>52</sup> Even the archconservative fundamentalists knew enough about Roman history to be able to compare Aleksei to the Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate. Although education remained confined to the training

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Chizhevsky, p. 346-357; L.N. Maikov, *Ocherki iz istorii russkoi literatury xvii i xviii stoletii*, St Petersburg, 1889.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. A. Mazon and F. Cocron, *La comédie d'Artaxerxès présentée en 1672 au Tsar Alexis*, Paris 1954.

<sup>51</sup> Billington, p. 149; Blanc, p. 451f.; B.E. Raikov, *Ocherki pogeliosentricheskogo mirovozzreniya v Rossii*, Moscow 1947, p. 118-131. Slavintsky also translated Thucydides and Vesalius: cf. Chizhevsky, p. 327.

<sup>52</sup> S.F. Platonov, *Moskva i zapad*, Berlin 1926, p. 138-146; cf. Blanc, p. 435f.

of priests, it was wholly dominated by the Latin-oriented schools of Simeon Polotsky and their teachers, priests often trained in Rome, Padua, or at a German university, and their teaching encompassed more than only theological and religious subjects and problems.<sup>53</sup>

The eighteenth century. In the summer of 1709, in Poltava, renowned for its cherries, Charles XII of Sweden suffers a crushing defeat at the hands of Peter the Great, is forced to seek safety in Turkish territory, and for many years remains there in utter devastation, sulking. Western Europe reacted with astonishment, even refusing, at first, to believe the news. The about-face of the philosopher Leibniz, after the news proved true, is typical. Only shortly before he had openly expressed the hope that the Swedish king would soon rule over all Muscovy, to the very banks of the Amur, but now he suddenly turned into a fountain bubbling with ideas and suggestions for his potential new patron, the victor of Poltava.<sup>54</sup>

Peter himself went from Poltava to Kiev and attended a thanksgiving service there in Sophia Cathedral (which had in turn been built in gratitude for Yaroslav's victory over the Pechenegs in 1037). The eulogy on the czar was pronounced by a young man aged twenty-eight, the prefect of the cathedral: Feofan Prokopovich (1681-1736). Sixteen years later, in 1725, Prokopovich again eulogized Peter, this time in the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul in St Petersburg, on the occasion of the emperor's funeral. At that time the Amsterdam bells still rang out from the tower.

Feofan Prokopovich, the son of a small merchant, was probably the most erudite Russian of his time. He knew the work of Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, Erasmus, and Luther, of Machiavelli, Galileo (whose praises he sung in a Latin poem), and Kepler, of Grotius, Descartes, Hobbes, and Locke. After his parents' death he had been fortunate in that one of his uncles, the Rector of the Academy of Kiev, had taken it upon himself to provide the boy with an education. This meant that he first went to a Jesuit school in Poland and then continued his training at the

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<sup>53</sup> M. Raeff, *Comprendre l'ancien régime russe*, Paris 1982, p. 35.

<sup>54</sup> Massie, p. 519; Aleksei Rostovtsev and Poltava: Pekarsky ii, p. 222 and 294.



Collegio Sant' Atanasio on the Via dei Greci (a street off the Via del Babuino) in Rome.<sup>55</sup> He stayed there for three years from 1698 to 1701. He became a Catholic, was present at the coronation in 1700 of Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Albani as Pope Clement XI, and in the meantime developed an ominous aversion to the exuberant Catholic lifestyle in general and to the pope in particular. But he did learn Latin. After staying in Protestant circles in Switzerland, he returned to Kiev and to orthodoxy and taught philosophy, rhetoric, and literature, all in Latin, at the Academy. He did his utmost to have mathematics and physics included in the curriculum and meanwhile was regularly suspected of harbouring strong Protestant sympathies.

In 1706, during a visit to Kiev, Peter heard one of Prokopovich's sermons in Sophia Cathedral. Two years later the hetman (commander) of the Ukrainian Cossacks, Mazepa, took side with Charles XII after his march on Kiev. The entire clergy followed his example, with one exception: Feofan Prokopovich. Consequently, after Peter's unexpected triumph at Poltava in 1709, he was the only cleric who could hold his head up high. In 1711 he accompanied Peter on his unsuccessful campaign against the Turks, in 1712 he became Rector of the Academy in Kiev, and in 1716 he accepted an invitation from Peter to come to St Petersburg for good.<sup>56</sup> From that moment he became Peter's closest associate: the adroit and polished intellectual and prelate next to the awkward and rough potentate and helmsman aboard the ship of state.

Even concise studies of Peter the Great almost always mention Prokopovich in connection with two matters. The first of these, chronologically speaking, is his cooperation in the 1721 drafting of the *Dukhovny Reglament*, the regulation in which the church was made entirely subordinate to the state through the replacement of the institution of the patriarchate by the Holy Synod. Despite its splendid name, the Holy Synod was not a truly independent synodal government (*soborno pravitelstvo*), but a kind of

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<sup>55</sup> Stökl, p. 378; Chizhevsky, p. 362ff.; R. Stupperich, "Feofan Prokopovich in Rom", *Zeitschrift für osteuropäische Geschichte* 5 (1931), p. 327ff.

<sup>56</sup> Massie, p. 790f.; Blanc, p. 455-461; N.D. Kochetkova, "Oratorskaya proza Feofana Prokopovicha i puti formirovaniya literaturny klassitsizma", *XVIII vek*, sbornik 9, Leningrad 1974; not to be missed: I. Chistovich, *Feofan Prokopovich i ego vremya*, Moscow 1868, and P. Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich kak pisatel*, St Petersburg 1880.

department for ecclesiastical affairs consisting of clerics appointed by the czar, who (in theory) were assisted and (in practice) supervised by an *Ober-Prokuror*, a kind of minister of ecclesiastical affairs.<sup>57</sup>

Secondly, Prokopovich is always mentioned as the author of the treatise on state theory *Pravda voli monarshei* ("The right of the will of the monarch") from 1722.<sup>58</sup> This treatise is an eclectic mixture of the most divergent political theories of West European thinkers from Thomas Aquinas to Thomas Hobbes. The existence of such a thing as "the will of the people" is recognized on paper by Prokopovich, but is at the same time completely robbed of any real significance and subordinated to the idea that the sovereign, in the execution of his task as the protector of his subjects against chaos and each other, is not accountable or responsible to anyone for anything and may demand absolute obedience of all. To put it Thomistically: *omnis potestas a deo per populum*. The difference with prevailing West European ideas is that Prokopovich effectively provides a philosophical legitimation of absolute arbitrary rule, whereas in the West it was always maintained that there were limits even for an absolute monarch, unwritten laws, in particular in the form of the right of primogeniture with regard to the designation of a successor (the conception of the *Pravda voli monarshei* is often directly related to Peter's passing over and execution of his son and designated successor Aleksei; a suggestive detail is that Prokopovich, in his funeral oration on Peter in 1725, compared the deceased czar with a Roman emperor who had also ordered the execution of his eldest son: Constantine the Great).<sup>59</sup> For a Dutch researcher it is surprising, to say the least, to observe that Prokopovich frequently derived arguments in favour of the absolute unlimited power of the sovereign from Hugo Grotius, who is otherwise invariably regarded as a champion of freedom and the founder of modern natural law.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Anderson, p. 110f.; Wittram ii, p. 181-186; E. Amburger, *Geschichte der Behördenorganisation Russlands von Peter dem Grossen bis 1917*, Leiden 1966, p. 108-112; James Cracraft, *The Church Reform of Peter the Great*, Stanford 1971, esp. p. 49-62; P.V. Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie dukhovnoi kollegii i dukhovnyi reglament*, Rostov n.D. 1916; text in: *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov* vi, no. 3718, p. 314-346.

<sup>58</sup> Text in: *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov* vii, no. 4870; German edition: *Das Recht der Monarchen in willkürlicher Bestellung der Reichs-Folge*, Berlin 1722.

<sup>59</sup> Blanc, p. 459ff.

<sup>60</sup> Wittram ii, p. 119f. and 534-535 n. 33-36; Lappo-Danilevsky, p. 371ff.;

Now, what is Prokopovich's significance for the classical tradition? To start with, he himself wrote a few works about aspects of antiquity: a discussion of Greek religion, published as an appendix to a translation of work by the mythographer Apollodorus; following that a treatise on the Amazons, now lost; in connection with his work on rhetoric he occupied himself with historiographical problems, basing himself on Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Flavius Josephus, Quintilian, and of course Lucian; for his poetics he naturally used Horace.<sup>61</sup>

More important than this work, which could be and was done by others as well, is his influence in the field of education, both as a representative of a group and as an individual. With regard to the former, from about 1720 onwards quite a few places in Russia saw the founding of a type of school which was already common throughout Europe: schools patterned after the Jesuit model, with a classical component in the form of Latin, rhetoric, and philosophy, and with a staff of teachers consisting of clergymen, but also open to non-clerical students. The fact that many Russian bishops, like Prokopovich, came from the Ukraine, was much more influential for the development of this kind of school, which made an important contribution to eighteenth-century Russian culture, than the circumstance that the czar was a fervid Westerner.<sup>62</sup>

As for the influence of Prokopovich as an individual, attention must be drawn to the private school which he founded in 1721, a boarding school, in his own house on the Karpovka in St Petersburg. It is well-known that vocational training was the main focus of education in the time of Peter the Great. Prokopovich's school was not so directly practice-based. Besides Greek and Latin, it also provided a separate course on Roman antiquities. Unlike the theological academies of Kiev and Moscow, his school no longer made history and antiquity subservient to theology, but treated them as independent disciplines.<sup>63</sup>

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Grotius: G. Gurvich, "‘Pravda voli monarshei’ Feofana Prokopovicha i eya zapadnoevropeiskie istochniki", *Ucheniya Zapiski Imperatorskago Yurievskago Universiteta* 1915, no. 11.

<sup>61</sup> Frolov, p. 42 and 49.

<sup>62</sup> Anderson, p. 118; cf. M. Okenfuss, "The Jesuit Origins of Petrine Education", in: J.G. Garrard (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century in Russia*, Oxford 1973, p. 106-130.

<sup>63</sup> Frolov, p. 42 and 49f.; Chistovich, p. 631-638.

To a certain extent Prokopovich thus anticipated the ambition to found an Academy of Sciences which Peter had cherished since 1701. Leibniz submitted one blueprint after another to the czar, but there is little reason to believe they created much effect.<sup>64</sup> The true originators were Peter's personal physician Laurentius Blumentrost Jnr., (who later was also closely involved in the founding of the University of Moscow in 1755) and Peter's librarian J.D. Schumacher.<sup>65</sup> The former became the first president, the latter the first secretary. The charter of foundation was signed by Peter a year before his death, but was only effectuated thereafter. The Academy of Sciences was meant to be a combination of an academy in the proper sense, after the example of the French Académie des Sciences (which had made Peter an associate member during his visit to Paris in 1717), and a university and a gymnasium. The Academy did not live up to its expectations, numbering only ten members in its early phase, all foreigners, seven of whom were in the mathematics department.<sup>66</sup>

The Academy also had a modest department for the humanities. This department consisted of three sections: (1) an archaeology section; (2) a history section; (3) a section for natural law and public law, combined with ethics and politics. *Akademik* and Professor of Archaeology was the German Gottfried Siegfried Bayer (1695-1738), friend, admirer, and biographer of Prokopovich. His work included a history of Edessa and various studies of the Scythians, the Cimmerians, and Hyperboreans, and the Greek colonization of the Black Sea coasts and the Crimea.<sup>67</sup> It is striking that the first professional archaeologist in Russia already paid so much attention to Southern Russia.

Bayer was the son of a poor artist from Königsberg. Besides Greek and Latin, he also claimed to know Hebrew and Chinese, and besides antiquity he also studied church history and Oriental languages. From 1726 onwards he was a member of the

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<sup>64</sup> Wittram ii, p. 206ff.; cf. E. Benz, *Leibniz und Peter der Grosse*, Berlin 1947, p. 75f.; S.V. Rozhdestvensky, "Ocherki po istorii sistem narodnago prosveshcheniya v Rossii v xviii-xix vekakh, i", in: *Zapiski istoriko-filologicheskago fakulteta Imperatorskago S. Peterburgskago Universiteta* 104, St Petersburg 1912.

<sup>65</sup> Wittram ii, p. 208 and 558 n. 88; cf. esp. Pekarsky i, p. 34ff., 46ff., 59ff.

<sup>66</sup> Wittram ii, p. 210f.; A. Lipski, "The Foundation of the Russian Academy of Sciences", *Isis* 44 (1953), p. 349-354.

<sup>67</sup> Blanc, p. 451; Frolov, p. 49-53.

Academy of Sciences. In St Petersburg he belonged to the circle of intellectuals who met regularly in Prokopovich's house during the *noctes atticae*, "Attic evenings", as he called them with an implicit reference to Aulus Gellius, and he was highly enthusiastic about them: one could believe that one was in classical Greece, he wrote, and one always learnt something, *nemo nisi doctior egressus*.<sup>68</sup>

It was only a small circle. The main figures beside Prokopovich were Vasily Nikitich Tatishchev (1686-1750) and the diplomat and poet Antiokh Kantemir (1709-1744), who died young. He was the son of Dumitru Cantemir, the Rumanian Governor of Moldavia, who had sided with the czar against the Turks in 1711.<sup>69</sup> Antiokh Kantemir was one of Bayer's pupils. During a long stay in France he had become personal friends with Montesquieu. His writings included satires modelled on Horace (whose work he translated), Persius, and Juvenal, and he is also the man who translated Molière and Fontenelle into Russian and introduced Newton's world view into Russia.<sup>70</sup> The trio Prokopovich-Tatishchev-Kantemir was known as "the learned guard" (*uchena-ya družhina*) and formed, as James Billington has said, "in many ways the first in the long line of self-conscious intellectual circles devoted to the propagation of secular knowledge".<sup>71</sup>

There is another interesting figure whom we should mention here: Vasily Kirillovich Tredyakovsky (1703-1769), one of the first Russian intellectuals not to hail from the Ukraine. He was the son of a priest from Astrakhan and studied in the Netherlands and at the Sorbonne in Paris (1726-1730). In 1745 he became an *akademik* in St Petersburg, where he was responsible for teaching Latin and Russian *eloquentia*. In this capacity he translated Charles Rollin's sixteen-volume *Histoire romaine*, dealing with the period 753-31 B.C., immensely popular in France, and its sequel, J.B.L. Crevier's *Histoire des empereurs romains depuis Auguste jusqu'à Constantin*. These

<sup>68</sup> Blanc, p. 451.

<sup>69</sup> Witttram i, p. 370; Chizhevsky, p. 392-401.

<sup>70</sup> Frolov, p. 58ff. and 65; Billington, p. 218 and 704 n. 10; M. Ehrhard, *Un ambassadeur de Russie à la cour de Louis xv, le prince Cantemir à Paris*, Paris 1938; M. Radovsky, *Antiokh Kantemir i Peterburgskaya Akademiya Nauk*, Moscow-Leningrad 1959; id., "Njuton i Rossiya", *Vestnik istorii mirovoi kultury* 1957, no. 6, p. 96-106.

<sup>71</sup> Billington, p. 186 and 698-699 n. 57; cf. P. Epifanov, "'Uchenaya družhina' i prosvetitelstvo xviii veka", *Voprosy istorii* 1963, no 3, p. 37-53.

translations were the first publications of contemporary work on Roman history in Russia. The works themselves contained quite a few critical remarks about despotism in general and despotic behaviour of some Roman emperors in particular. Tredyakovsky was also the man who introduced the hexameter into Russian poetry and, following the success of Fénelon's *Télémaque* in Russia, wrote a sequel entitled *Tilemakhida*.<sup>72</sup>

Finally, the most famous representative of the Russian Enlightenment, Mikhail Vasilievich Lomonosov (1711-1765), son of a farmer and fisherman from Kholmogori not far from Archangel on the White Sea, and risen to such a status as to be called "the Peter the Great of Russian literature", was personally encouraged to study in his younger years by Prokopovich and as a student even temporarily exchanged the theological academy of Moscow for that of Kiev. His studies in ancient history and Russian language, literature, and versification testify to a sound classical underground.<sup>73</sup> During his stay in Marburg on the Lahn (1736-1739) he was a pupil of, among others, Gottsched. In 1742 he became the first full Russian member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Tredyakovsky followed three years later. At that time Prokopovich had been dead for ten years. One could say that he merely overlaid Russia with a patina of *latinstvo*, but one might also maintain that this patina could no longer be removed and that slowly but surely something of a cult of antiquity was starting to become visible. "The belief subtly grew that classical antiquity could—unaided by Christian revelation—answer many of the pressing problems of life".<sup>74</sup>

On 22 October 1721 there were celebrations in St Petersburg, with fireworks, and with catching allegorical representations, the brilliantly employed means of impressing on the gaping and tippling populace of Petropolis how the authorities wished the festivities to be construed. The organizers used Graeco-Roman

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<sup>72</sup> Frolov, p. 68-71; Chizhevsky, p. 401-413; R. Burgi, *A History of the Russian Hexameter*, Hamden, Conn., 1954, esp. p. 40-60; Pekarsky ii, p. 1-258; on Rollin and Crévier: A.D. Momigliano, "La formazione della moderna storiografia sull' Impero Romano", *Contributo alla storia degli studi classici*, Rome 1955, p. 128; A. Demandt, *Der Fall Roms, Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt*, München 1984, p. 143 and 216.

<sup>73</sup> Blanc, p. 457; Frolov, p. 73ff.; Chizhevsky, p. 414-428.

<sup>74</sup> Billington, p. 189.

mythology because they believed it was the only set of images and symbols with which general truths could be illustrated. What was the reason for the revelry?

The Nordic war had been brought to a permanent and glorious end. This called for appropriate celebrations. On 20 October the senate had decided to ask Peter to approve a proposal granting him the honorary titles of *Pater Patriae*, Father of the Country, *Imperator*, and *Magnus*, the Great. The czar requested time to reflect on the matter. He consulted with representatives of the senate and with the archbishops of the former republics Novgorod and Pskov. For the length of a day Peter performed “le rite de refus”. Then he agreed. *S.P.Q.P.*, the Senate and the People of Petropolis cheered, and fireworks lit the sky.<sup>75</sup>

Was it rigged? Of course. But who could have thought it all up? Not the senate. This body did have its name in common with the ancient Roman senate, but that was all. The senate of St Petersburg had been instituted in 1711 as a kind of collective leadership, with the task of looking after current affairs in the absence of the czar. Current affairs did not include foreign policy and military matters. These Peter kept to himself, even when he was not in the capital. The senate consisted—the second difference with Rome—of only nine members, none of whom was an intimate of the czar or a real intellectual. Indeed, at least one senator was illiterate. It is absurd to assume that any one of these nine was sufficiently educated to think up such a classicistically charged proposal.<sup>76</sup> Nor is it very likely that Peter himself, with his rudimentary knowledge of Alexander the Great and Aesop’s Fables, could have whispered the idea into the senate’s ear.

The matter must have been carefully directed and stage-managed, including the firework with its flaming display in which the doors of a temple of Janus (a Roman god) were jointly closed by a lion (Sweden) and an eagle (Russia). In fact, the idea can only be attributed to Feofan Prokopovich. All the above elements of homage, including the feigned hesitation to accept, can be found in the classical sources on Julius Caesar and Augustus, with the exception of the title “the Great”, but that may be simply

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<sup>75</sup> Wittram ii, p. 462-466.

<sup>76</sup> Klyuchevsky, p. 200-205; Wittram ii, p. 105-108; Anderson, p. 128; Amburger, p. 8f., 62f., 71f.

due to the fact that the Roman title *Augustus*, in 27 B.C. granted by the senate to Octavianus, had since then lost its value as a title and had become more a personal name (as with the hated Jagello Sigismund II Augustus of Poland).<sup>77</sup>

This is not a complete answer to the question of the classical sources in relation to the titles granted in 1721. But there are two points to make. First, the realization of the *Dukhovny Regliment*, also in 1721, and its subordination of the church to the czar, prompted Prokopovich in one of his writings to name the czar as the successor of the Roman emperors and as *Pontifex Maximus* of all churches and religious groups, Christian and non-Christian, in his empire.<sup>78</sup> Second, during the solemn acceptance of the titles in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity (incidentally the first church, built by Peter, of the monastery of Aleksandr Nevsky, the patron saint of Russia, who gained an important victory over the Swedes on this very spot in 1241), Prokopovich pronounced the eulogy on the emperor. When Chancellor Gavriil Ivanovich Golovkin, on behalf of the senate and the people, went on to offer the titles to the czar in a second speech, he was most likely reading from a text dictated by Prokopovich. Indeed, the same may well be true of Peter's word of thanks.

In his word of thanks Peter made it clear that he was dissatisfied with the title of "czar" (*Tsar i Samoderzhets*), introduced by Ivan IV Grozny in 1547 after the Byzantine example (*Basileus kai Autokrator*), and he expressed the hope that he and his successors in their pursuit of peace would come through any wars by relying on their own power, "so that we shall not suffer the same fate as the Greek monarchy" (the Byzantine Empire). Peter opted for the West, for Rome, for *imperium sine fine*. The end came in 1917: that year is the end of Roman emperorship in the Russian Empire.

How many people in St Petersburg and Russia in 1721 would have been aware of the implications and the ideological purport of the celebrations of 22 October? The question is a rhetorical one, since the sources fail to provide an answer. To reach the same level of development as Western Europe, that was the motto of an

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<sup>77</sup> On "the Great" see P.P. Spranger, "Der Grosse, Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des historischen Beinamens in der Antike", *Saeculum* 9 (1958), p. 22-58.

<sup>78</sup> Blanc, p. 458.



increasing, if still relatively small, number of educated people from Peter the Great onwards. They shared the enthusiasm formulated by Peter when the Academy of Sciences was founded: "we want to show that we are working for science in our country too and that the time is past when we could be regarded as barbarians who feel only contempt for intellectual activity and science". This statement can be found in the first volume of Brockhaus-Efron's great Russian encyclopedia published in 1890.<sup>79</sup>

One might call this a presumptuous and unrealistic idea, at any rate for 1721.<sup>80</sup> That would not be quite fair. It was more a dream. The distance between the common people and the elite increased as the dream came true. But this was also realized at a certain stage in the nineteenth century itself and much was done to reduce the distance, particularly in the years after 1905. The dream did not remain a dream. In 1889 the classical scholar Professor V.I. Modestov could proudly announce, in a speech for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the University of Odessa: "I can publicly state in full consciousness that a Russian science exists—that Russian science about the creation of which, in the days of our youth, we could only speak as about a dream, a remote idea". Admittedly, Modestov goes on to add, this Russian science is still young: "In the countries where science has already existed for five, six, or seven centuries, in the countries which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the scene of the enormous and for European culture so beneficial revolution known as the Renaissance, in these countries science in our time is much more alive than in our country. We cannot compare our science with French, English or German science, which set the standard in today's world. In many respects we lag far behind Italy and Spain, even the Scandinavian countries, despite their geographically and politically insignificant position at this moment. In general it is still difficult for us to measure up to Western European science, but nevertheless the time is past when we had to rely on foreigners to hold our chairs. There is a long way to go yet and we still have much to do, *eppur si muove*".<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Quoted by Anderson, p. 118f.

<sup>80</sup> Billington, p. 190.

<sup>81</sup> V.I. Modestov, "Russkaya nauka v posledniya dvadchatpyat let", *Russkaya Mysl* 1890, no. 5, p. 73-91; the passage quoted: p.90f.

The quotation attests to an almost moving sense of confidence and to positive patriotism. Modestov has not overstated his case. The historian today, a hundred years later, is forced to observe in all modesty that the best, most detailed, and most thorough studies of people, problems, and matters dealt with in this chapter were often produced in the years immediately before and after Modestov's speech.

At the same time a supreme effort was made to reduce the distance between the elite and the masses. This might have succeeded, but in fact failed. That, in contour, is the background to the famous "last question" of the twentieth-century historian and exile Michael Rostovtzeff: "Is it possible to extend a higher civilization to the lower classes without debasing its standard and diluting its quality to the vanishing point? Is not every civilization bound to decay as soon as it begins to penetrate the masses?"<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> M.I. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, second edition, Oxford 1957, p. 451.

## CHAPTER TWO

### PETRO PRIMO CATHARINA SECUNDA

"... Yesterday morning, sitting at the window with Winckelmann in my hand, I abandoned myself to a sweet reverie, of which I cannot even hope to give you an account. I had read the book before, but had completely forgotten it. Overlooking the Neva covered with ships, overlooking the splendid quay to which the citizens of St Petersburg invariably turn a dull eye because they have long since become used to the view, and full of affection for the countless throng of people moving before my eyes, with its wonderful mixture of all nations—I discerned Englishmen and Asians, Frenchmen and Kalmuks, Russians and Finns—I can only remember asking myself the following question: What was in this place before St Petersburg was built? Perhaps a pine wood, a damp and dense forest of conifers, or a sodden marsh, breeding ground of flies and cowberries; on the bank the humble hut of a fisherman; spread out around it his hoop-nets and trawls, and all the other requisites of his meagre trade. Hither, it seemed to me, a hunter, some or other long-haired Finn, was toiling his way...

Everything was quiet here. Only rarely did a human voice break the silence of the gloomy and desolate wilderness. And now? I could not help looking at Troitsky bridge, and then at the austere house of the great autocrat, to whom the famous line is so justly applicable:

*'souvent un faible gland recèle un chêne immense'.*

In my imagination I saw Peter as he surveyed the uninhabited bank of the Neva for the first time, the same Neva which is now so splendid! From the fortress of Nyenschanz the Swedish cannons still resounded. The Neva estuary was still strewn with enemies and gunshots rang out continuously along the sodden bank, when the exalted thought was born in the great man's brain: 'Let there be a city here,' he spoke, 'a wonder of the world'. 'Hither I summon all Arts and Crafts. Here Arts and Crafts and civil regulations and laws will tame Nature itself.' Thus he spoke, and St Petersburg rose from the wild marsh."

A great deal can happen in a hundred years. But there is probably no city in Europe where more happened in the first hundred years of its existence than St Petersburg. Although Konstantin Nikolaevich Batyushkov (1787-1855), following the reverie quoted above—it is the second page of his twenty-page *Walk to the Academy of Arts* from 1814<sup>1</sup>—continues with a lavish eulogy on Peter the Great, the fact remains that in 1814 St Petersburg, apart from the odd nostalgic exception such as the house of Peter himself, in no way resembled the city of the founder. The metamorphosis of the Russian Amsterdam into what came to be called the “Palmyra of the North” at the end of the eighteenth century had mainly been the work of Catherine the Great and her architects and city-planners. After the Rococo and the Baroque from the time before Catherine, classicism now started to dominate the appearance of the city. The St Petersburg which Batyushkov described in his *Walk* was a new city. Isaac Cathedral in its present form and with its porticoes derived from the Pantheon in Rome was only completed in 1858. The Academy of Arts, the destination of the walk, went back no farther than 1768. It is one of the finest buildings in the city: a simple square form with sides of 130 meters long, two storeys and an attic, in front of the entrance with columns and pilasters statues of the Farnese Hercules and Flora, the dome crowned by an enormous Minerva. A truly magnificent space for artists, professors, and stipendiaries.

One thing that had stayed, however, and indeed had matured in barely fifty years, was Peter’s ambition, fueled by Feofan Prokopovich, to make his city into a new Rome. The sobriquet Palmyra was all the more pleasing to the ear in that the sound of this name, pronounced in Russian, corresponds precisely to that of the two words *pol mira*, “half of the world”, and thus served to proclaim grand dreams of world power.<sup>2</sup> It was clear to Tredyakovsky, mentioned in the previous chapter as an adept of Prokopovich, that St Petersburg could call itself the equal of all the famous cities of antiquity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> K.N. Batyushkov, *Sochineniya*, redaktsiya, statya i kommentarii D.D. Blagogo, Moscow-Leningrad 1934, p. 320-340.

<sup>2</sup> W. Lednicki, *Pushkin’s Bronze Horseman, The Story of a Masterpiece*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1955, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lednicki, p. 44.

Another man of letters, Aleksandr Petrovich Sumarokov (1718-1777), had had a French education and consequently saw himself as a Russian Racine and Voltaire all in one. In 1756 he became the first director of the first permanent theatre in St Petersburg. Owing to this position, he is perhaps the man who did more than anyone else to implant and propagate classical antiquity—if a certain kind of classical antiquity—in the culture of St Petersburg. Although his stage productions can be called, in the words of Mirsky, “a stultification of the classical method”, yet the same Mirsky immediately adds that “the educated and semi-educated, and even uneducated, classes of the time were fascinated by the acting of classical actors in classical tragedies and comedies”.<sup>4</sup> Sumarokov labelled St Petersburg, Graecized to Petropolis, as “the Rome of the North”, “the eternal buttress of the Russian Empire”, and this Rome, of course, could only be a *new Rome*.<sup>5</sup>

Gavrila Romanovich Derzhavin (1743-1816) is one of the first of a larger number of poets who sounded this note of modernizing classicism on their lyres: *Petropolis Roma Renata et Renovata*.<sup>6</sup> Osip Mandelshtam (1891-1938) was one of the last: St Petersburg, “the maidenly Rome on the bank of the Neva”.<sup>7</sup> In short, the second half of the eighteenth century is the period of the canonization of many Graeco-Roman commonplaces in the culture of St Petersburg, it is the period of the birth of the Russian *klassitsizm* that would firmly hold in its grasp the best Russian poets up to and including Anna Akhmatova (1889-1966) and Marina Tsvetaeva (1892-1941).

When a cynical West European like Casanova, convinced of the superiority of his own culture, walked through the Summer Garden in 1765 and saw the imitation classical statues there, he thought them merely pathetic and ridiculous: “I marvelled at the statuary it contained, all the statues being made of the worst stone,

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<sup>4</sup> D.S. Mirsky, *A History of Russian Literature from its Beginnings to 1900*, ed. by Francis J. Whitfield, New York (Vintage) 1958, p. 47f., 53f.

<sup>5</sup> S.A. Vengerov (ed.), *Russkaya poeziya*, vol. i, St Petersburg 1897, p. 170; cf. N.P. Antsiferov, *Dusha Peterburga*, Petrograd 1922, p. 50ff.; Stephen L. Baehr, “In the Beginning: Rebirth, Renewal and *Renovatio* in Eighteenth-Century Russia”, in: A.G. Cross (ed.), *Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century*, Newtonville, Mass., 1983, p. 152-166, esp. 160; Lednicki, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> Mirsky, p. 49-53; Antsiferov, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> “Devichy Rim na beregu Nevy”; cf. Wolfgang Schlott, *Zur Funktion antiker Göttermythen in der Lyrik Osip Mandelschtsams*, Frankfurt-Bern 1981, p. 135.

and executed in the worst possible taste". He also looked at the accompanying inscriptions and found, much to his amusement, that the names were completely wrong: "A weeping statue was Democritus, an old woman, Avicenna; another, with grinning mouth, was labelled Heraclitus; and so on".<sup>8</sup> Despite Casanova's criticism, the open-air galleries of the Summer Garden and of idyllic imperial estates such as Petrodvorets and Tsarskoe Selo and others were soon imitated in the statue parks of the Russian nobility. If no stone was available and no sculptors could be found, there was always another way of obtaining the desired status symbols, at any rate until the abolition of serfdom in 1861: people, "dead souls", could be whitened, placed on pedestals, and made to pose as statues. It could hardly be any cheaper.

That this solution was used on at least one occasion appears from a childhood memory from the late 1850's recorded by Baron Nikolai Wrangel, the father of the White Army General P.N. Wrangel (1878-1928), well-known from the civil war of 1918-1920, in his candid and very worthwhile memoirs.<sup>9</sup> He mentions there a certain Count Visapur, whose grandfather had come from India or Afghanistan to St Petersburg in the time of Catherine the Great. In the country the estate of Count Visapur bordered on that of the Wrangels. The day after the death of Count Visapur young Nikolai visited his estate together with his father. Previous visits had left a festive impression, on account of the beautiful park with its flowerbeds and ponds and the gondolas gliding gracefully over the canals surrounded by white statues of ancient gods and heroes. But the statues were now gone. Only the pedestals were still there. The steward explained the absence of the statues by remarking that they were working the land. The statues had not been real statues, but naked and whitewashed youths and girls, who were forced to stand on the pedestals for hours without moving, in the pose appropriate to their role, whenever it pleased the count to walk in his park or go out in a gondola. One day a Hercules and a Venus had jumped off their pedestals during one of these walks: Venus threw sand in the count's eyes and Hercules broke his neck with a heavy blow of his club. Both were

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<sup>8</sup> See L. Kelly (ed.), *St. Petersburg. A Traveller's Companion*, London 1981, p. 168.

<sup>9</sup> *From Serfdom to Bolshevism, The Memoirs of Baron N. Wrangel 1847-1920*, translated by Brian and Beatrix Lunn, New York 1971, p. 42f.

sentenced to the strap. Venus succumbed to the lashes, Hercules proved less mortal and was sent to Siberia.

It could also be otherwise. Ivan Vladimirovich Tsvetaev (1846-1913), whose daughter is now famous throughout the world as one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century, dreamt all his life of the founding of a museum of antiquities. The dream came true in May 1912, when the Emperor Alexander III Museum of Fine Arts was opened. The museum with its collection of plaster casts exists to this very day, but the name of Alexander III has been replaced by that of Pushkin. Marina Tsvetaeva has written splendidly about it.<sup>10</sup> One passage from one of these writings will serve for a first impression. It is the beginning of the essay *Father and his museum*:

"The dream of the museum began ... in a distant time when my father, the son of a poor village priest in the village of Talitsy, in the Shuisky district, in Vladimir province, set foot for the first time on Roman stone. At that time he was a twenty-six year-old philologist, provided with a traveling scholarship by Kiev University to go abroad. But I am mistaken: in that instant was born the resolve to bring a museum into existence, the dream of a museum began, of course, before Rome—in the showery gardens of Kiev and perhaps even in the thickets of Talitsy, in the Shuisky district, where he had studied Latin and Greek by the light of a *burning splinter*. 'Now if only I could see it with my own eyes!' and later, when he had seen it, 'Now if only others (like him, bare-footed and 'splintered') could see it with their own eyes!'

The dream of a Russian museum of sculpture was, I can boldly state, born along with my father. The year of my father's birth is 1846."<sup>11</sup>

Ivan Tsvetaev and Count Visapur are two antipoles in the magnetic field of the attractive force of the classics in the Russian empire of the nineteenth century. They can even be regarded as exponents of two opposite approaches to, two uses of, antiquity. One approach—that of Tsvetaev—I will from now on refer to as *action*, that is to say, as the view of the holy faith—accordingly put into

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<sup>10</sup> Marina Tsvetaeva, *A Captive Spirit: Selected Prose*, ed. and transl. by J. Marin King, London (Virago) 1983, p. 179-190 ("My Father and his Museum"), p. 191-194 ("Charlottenburg"), p. 195-198 ("The Uniform"), p. 199-200 ("The Laurel Wreath"), p. 201-206 ("The Opening of the Museum").

<sup>11</sup> *A Captive Spirit*, p. 179.

practice—in the classics as a source of inspiration and life, of *life which constantly renews and elevates itself*. By contrast, the other approach—that of Visapur—is wholly dominated by the element of the classics as a status symbol, of the classics as serving to confirm the status quo. For this approach I therefore use the term *reaction*.

Reality is always more complicated than people think. Historical reality is always more complicated than historians think. That truth obtains here too. It is not so easy to indicate exactly what at a certain time can or must be regarded as an exponent of action and what as an exponent of reaction. A whole battalion of colleagues took exception to the Hungarian sociologist Karl Mannheim when he introduced the distinction—similar to the action-reaction dichotomy—between utopia and ideology: utopia as the whole body of ideas which conflicts with the status quo and wishes to change it; ideology as the whole body of ideas which is in harmony with the status quo and wishes to preserve it. What is true of Mannheim's distinction is *mutatis mutandis* true of the proposed distinction between action and reaction: "the utopias of ascendant classes are often, to a large extent, permeated with ideological elements".<sup>12</sup>

But no single dichotomy is truly watertight, and perhaps it makes some sense to try at any rate to order the great mass of data on the subject of the reception and function of ancient culture and its products in Russia, including the scientific study of them, in the coordinate system of action and reaction. In doing so I shall argue that a parting of ways took place in the period 1765-1835, in which the function of antiquity, which at first was exclusively or mainly dominated by the element of action, after a short period of balance between action and reaction, came more and more to be dominated, if not in theory then certainly in practice, by the element of reaction. The dominant position of reaction never disappeared in the rest of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, even though it was regularly challenged, for instance by great men and women like Osip Mandelshtam and Marina Tsvetaeva, but also by professional classicists like Ivan Tsvetaev and others who will be mentioned further on in this book.

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<sup>12</sup> K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, London 1968, p. 183.



Let us beware of the “terrible simplification”: it is, of course, too easy to pin down the change to one year or a few years or to the influence of one character or a few characters. Sometimes we can observe a change—always from action to reaction, never in the opposite direction—within the life of one and the same person: Catherine the Great, for instance, or Karamzin. Victories are often less enduring than they seem. So are defeats, therefore, we may hope. It is, in a sense, a history which constantly repeats itself. Nevertheless it is, all in all, mainly a tragic history, certainly in Russia, where it is an aspect of the much farther-reaching history of the decline to the nadir of a culture which seemed to be rapidly rising to its zenith. ... *neglecta solent incendia sumere vires*.<sup>13</sup>

Let us start with Catherine the Great. She was not at all amused when Casanova shared with her the hilarity which had seized him during his stroll past the ugly and mislabelled statues of the Summer Garden. How could she be?

Catherine the Second, also called the Great, was born in Stettin in 1729 under the name Sophie Friederike von Anhalt-Zerbst. At the beginning of 1744 she had come to St Petersburg as the fiancée of Peter III, the grandson of Peter the Great born in 1728, who had suffered from a serious lack of affection in his childhood and had consequently grown infantile. The marriage was performed in the summer of 1745 and confirmed Catherine for seventeen years in her growing contempt for and aversion to her husband. On Christmas Day in 1761 Peter III was crowned emperor. Six months later he was deposed via an exemplary palace revolution. Ten days later Catherine announced the death of her husband to the Russian people. She did not announce that he had been killed. She ruled from 1762 to 1796, a reign surpassed in length only by those of Ivan IV the Terrible and Peter the Great (but they had only been seventeen on becoming czar; Catherine was thirty-three and therefore fully mature).

At the end of 1744 Peter was gravely ill. Had he died at that time, no one would have been surprised. In this situation the then fifteen-year-old Catherine, on the advice of the Swedish diplomat H.A. Gyllenborg, who had been struck by her cleverness, and via the Academy of Sciences, bought an edition of Plutarch's bio-

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<sup>13</sup> Horace, *Epistles* i 18, 85.

graphies (probably in Amyot's well-known and influential translation), Tacitus' *Annales*, and Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (first anonymously published in Amsterdam in 1734). She was still too young to understand much of these, but later the books proved very useful, as she wrote in her *Mémoires*.

Others followed, including Plato, Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois*, Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, Voltaire's *Essai sur les mœurs*, and the *Encyclopédie*.<sup>14</sup> It cannot be said that Catherine wasted her time on needlework. Isabel de Madariaga tells us that Catherine's reading of Tacitus had a reassuring and stimulating effect: "there was not so much republican virtue about Rome after all, Praetorian guards made and unmade emperors". Peter III would have time to reflect on this in 1762, though not much. Tacitus was indeed a far cry from the Aesop's Fables of his dearly departed grandfather.

The night of New Year's Day 1 January 1763 was, as usual, graced with fireworks in St Petersburg. It opened with an allegorical representation of a "Trajan's Column", erected in honour of Catherine and surrounded by altars where the "blessed nations of the Russian empire" brought their offerings.<sup>15</sup> It was the first time that Russia celebrated the turn of the year under Catherine. She was by no means still a virgin, but this did not prevent the organizers from making the fireworks symbolic of the return of the Golden Age and devoting a scene to the rise of the "salutary sun" under the returned Virgin Catherine. By way of an explanation for the spectators, the famous sixth line of Virgil's fourth eclogue was added as a caption:

*iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.*

Since not everybody knew Latin, a translation was also supplied:

"Astraea will return, the Golden Age returns".

The reference had more or less already become a commonplace in the panegyric poems of Tredyakovsky and especially Sumarokov during the reign of Catherine's predecessor Elizabeth Petrovna (1741-1761), but nevertheless the name Astraea in Russia would come to be particularly associated with Catherine, just as

<sup>14</sup> *Mémoires*, ed. A.N. Pypin, vol. i, St Petersburg 1901, p. 60ff.; vol. iv, p. 215f.; cf. Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, London 1981, p. 1-9 and 598f.

<sup>15</sup> Baehr, p. 160f.

the same name in England had before been particularly associated with Queen Elizabeth.<sup>16</sup> Astraea or Dike was the goddess of justice, who, as the last of the gods, had turned her back on the earth in the Iron Age of mankind, in order to take her place in the heavens as Virgo among the other signs of the zodiac.<sup>17</sup> To quote Stephen Baehr:

By a twist of fate and a turn (or trope) of rhetoric, Catherine had thus "become" the virgin goddess who would re-begin the history of the world.

It would not remain confined to that single display of fireworks. Baehr again:<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the century adjectives like *novyi* ("new") and *utoroi* ("the second"), nouns like *vozvrashchenie* ("the return") and *zaria* ("the dawn") and adverbs like *paki* ("again") and *unov* ("anew") multiplied to describe repetitions of historical or mythological events or personalities. Thus Russia was often described as the "new Rome" or "new Athens" and its citizens were depicted through such epithets as ... "the new Pindar", or "the new Horace"; courtly festivals were given such titles as *Fortuna redux* ... etc.

Catherine became, with some topographical inexactitude, the "Semiramis of the North" in her Palmyra of the North. Via Voltaire she made it known to the world, with some historical inexactitude, that the Turks had destroyed classical Greece and that it was this misdeed which had made them so odious to her.<sup>19</sup> Was there not a beautiful task here for one who so liked to shine as *Minerva Triumphans*? This task was defined in the so-called "Greek project". Its aims were no less than the total expulsion of the Turks from Europe and the liberation of Constantinople. In order that her second grandson born in 1779 could later occupy the position of Greek Orthodox emperor on the Bosphorus, Catherine had already had him named Konstantin—a *novus Constantinus*—and had

<sup>16</sup> Cf. F.A. Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea", *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 10 (1947), p. 27-82; the parallel has been noted in Russia in 1742 by *akademik* G.F. Junker: see Baehr, p. 159 and 164 n. 35.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* i 149f. on the departure of Astraea (without alluding to her possible return):

Victa iacet pietas, et Virgo caede manentes  
ultima caelestum terras Astraea reliquit.

<sup>18</sup> Baehr, p. 156f.

<sup>19</sup> De Madariaga, p. 336f.

entrusted him to the care of a Greek nurse.<sup>20</sup> It would never come to that, but the conquest alone, in 1788, of the strategically situated Turkish fort Ochakov, which commanded the Dnyepyr and Bug estuaries, was enough inspiration for the Ukrainian poet I.F. Bogdanovich (1743-1803) to write a poem in which the main character, a shepherdess from Ochakov, calls herself a descendant of the ancient Greeks and in her eulogy on Catherine expresses the hope that the new Constantine will lead the people walking in darkness (the Greeks) back into the light and that a new Achilles will once again frighten the new Troy (Turkey). And of course the Golden Fleece would once again have to be recovered...<sup>21</sup>

Needless to say, Catherine's conquests in the South and the way in which these were made public with reference to this kind of classical motives contributed a great deal to the intensive archeological and historical study—continuing up to this very day—of the Greek colonies in the Crimea and along the northern coast of the Black Sea and their contacts with the peoples of the South Russian steppes.

In the coordinate system of action and reaction this rhetorical juggling with a mythical antiquity scores more points on the axis of reaction than on that of action. It is more the varnish of a triumphalistic craving for power, as it repeatedly was, for that matter, in the real Rome of antiquity and its poetry, than a conscious effort to explain the "condition humaine" which is the hallmark of a truly classical body of thought—i.e. thought which is not tied to a particular period—or an authentic expression of Humanist or neo-Humanist creativity. This is symbolically confirmed by the new naval port of Sebastopol founded in 1784 on the southwest point of the Crimea: the name derives from the Greek *Sebaste Polis* and *Sebaste* is in turn the Greek translation of the proud Roman imperial title *Augusta*; but the reality behind the name inspired the English philosopher and reformer Jeremy Bentham (who, during a visit to St Petersburg in 1779, failed to gain Catherine's approval for his proposal on a new Russian constitution) to design his famous panopticon, a gigantic model prison where one guard could look into all the cells without the aid of hidden television cameras.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Cf. E. Hösch, "Das sogenannte 'Griechische Projekt' Katharinas II.," *Jahrbücher zur Geschichte Osteuropas* 12 (1964), p. 168-206; de Madariaga, p. 383f.

<sup>21</sup> Baehr, p. 157; text of the poem: Vengerov i, p. 596.

<sup>22</sup> Sebastopol was built under the direction of a brother of Jeremy

Prosaically the discrepancy between glossy appearances and unvarnished reality can be made clear by a brief and dry summary of a number of events and administrative measures from Catherine's reign which can be found in every handbook.

- 1766 the noble landowners are confirmed in their right to send disobedient peasants to Siberia; the property rights of various categories of small independent farmers are restricted;
- 1767 the serfs, under threat of punitive measures, are denied the right to lodge complaints about unjust actions of their masters;
- 1772 first Polish partition;
- 1773 beginning of the Pugachev rebellion: a dangerous social-revolutionary movement of various disaffected population groups;
- 1775 execution of Pugachev;
- 1783 serfdom extended to the Ukraine;
- 1791 first curtailment of the freedom of movement of the Jews;
- 1792 serfs on country estates, together with the rest of the inventory, are regarded as immovable goods of the landowners;
- 1793 second Polish partition; Catherine's manifesto on the French Revolution: the relations with France are severed, all French citizens are expelled from Russia, Russians are not permitted to travel to France;
- 1795 third Polish partition;
- 1796 censorship and control of the importation of books from abroad is tightened.

Was there any criticism? Were classical sources used in this criticism? If there was criticism, could it be freely expressed and printed? France, certainly until 1789 the holy land of Russian classicism, had had its "querelle des anciens et des modernes" since 1687. Had this "querelle" also penetrated as far as Russia? Were there no voices in Russia claiming that the modern age, modern art, modern poetry, modern science were by far superior to everything antiquity had produced?

There was criticism. Particularly the sixties and seventies were

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Bentham, cf. J.H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, New York (Vintage) 1970, p. 225.

a period in which all kinds of bold thoughts passed censorship without any trouble. Yakov B. Knyazhnin (1742-1791), the son-in-law of Sumarokov and the main tragic poet of Catherine's rule, imitated Voltaire and some of his plays breathe an almost revolutionary spirit. He took the liberty of producing a play called *Dido*, in which he has a group of Carthaginians conspire to overthrow their queen on account of her overly intimate relations with her Trojan favourite. Catherine was not so unlettered as to be incapable of recognizing herself in this Dido, but she did not flinch. For her favourite of the moment, Prince Potemkin, she had the Taurid Palace built in St Petersburg in 1783-1788 (Taurid referred to the ancient Greek name for the Crimea). This was also the period in which most of Voltaire's tragedies were translated and published in Russia. Some of these, for instance *La mort de César* and *Brutus*, contain long tirades against tyranny and for freedom.<sup>23</sup>

All this was permitted. As long as it was confined to rhetoric, no direct threat was posed. It was an apparent freedom, in many ways reminiscent of the apparent freedom in the early imperial age of ancient Rome: at that time Lucius Sestius, a loyal friend of Brutus, could openly revere the memory of Caesar's assassin and succeed Augustus as a consul in 23 B.C. Cato could without peril be invoked as a paragon of republican virtue, even by figures closely affiliated to Augustus such as Virgil and Horace. Lucan was compelled to commit suicide only after he had become involved in a conspiracy.<sup>24</sup>

There were two critics in Catherine's Russia who went further than rhetoric. Together they are the first to embark on the spectral ship which was to set course for the revolution. One is very well-known: Aleksandr Nikolaevich Radishchev (1749-1802). The other is virtually unknown: Grigory Savvich Skovoroda (1722-1794). They found it considerably more difficult to get their writings published. Indeed, of Skovoroda nothing at all appeared in print in his lifetime, and it was not until a century after his death, i.e. in 1894, that a (heavily censored) edition of his collected works could be published.<sup>25</sup> For a time after that he attracted

<sup>23</sup> De Madariaga, p. 627 n. 29, 533, 537.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order. Treason, Unrest and Alienation in the Empire*, Cambridge, Mass., 1966, ch. i, esp. p. 18-27.

<sup>25</sup> G.S. Skovoroda, *Sochineniya*, ed. D. Bagalei, Kharkov 1894.

the interest of the secretary of Lenin and the first Soviet government, V.D. Bonch-Bruevich (1873-1955).<sup>26</sup> His room in the Kremlin was next to that of Lenin, or rather, as Zinaida Hippus writes in her memoirs, "they more or less lived in the same room, since instead of a door a hole had been made in the wall between the two rooms".<sup>27</sup> It is doubtless on this account that Lenin signed a government order in 1918 to erect a statue for Skovoroda.<sup>28</sup> But who was Grigory Skovoroda?

He is called the first Russian philosopher.<sup>29</sup> The name he himself preferred was the Russian Socrates. He was more than just a philosopher. Originally he was a theologian, a product of the Academy of Kiev with its "Latin scholasticism". He was sent out to Western Europe: Austria, Germany, Italy, and was expert in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, translating, among others, Virgil, Horace, and Plutarch. Back in the Ukraine he became a professor at various theological colleges. But he was not satisfied with the official church and the official religion. The secular court culture was even less to his liking. He opted for an existence as a "drop-out", and persisted in his Franciscan-esque vagabondage from 1766 until his death in 1794. He could perhaps be called a reincarnated late Roman "holy man" or a reincarnated street philosopher of the Stoic-Cynic type.<sup>30</sup> Billington, one of the few Western historians to discuss him at some length, calls him "a kind of secular version of the medieval mendicant pilgrim", "the untitled outsider, ... the homeless romantic, the passionate believer unable to live within the confines of any established system of belief, ... suspended somewhere between sainthood and total egoism".<sup>31</sup> But the remarkable thing is that even this precursor of the "seeker of God" (*bogoiskatel*) was guided by the paradigm of antiquity in his polemic with the world which he rejected. His idealistic metaphysics is strongly reminiscent of and was indeed

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<sup>26</sup> In 1912 Bonch-Bruevich published a new edition of the works of Skovoroda; the most recent one is by Biletssky a.o., Kiev 1961.

<sup>27</sup> *Between Paris and St Petersburg: Selected Diaries of Zinaida Hippus*, translated and edited by Temira Pachmuss, 1975.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 2nd ed., vol. 39, 1956, p. 245.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. B. Zenkovsky, *Histoire de la philosophie russe*, vol. i, Paris 1953, p. 64-82.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. M.I. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1957, p. 114-121.

<sup>31</sup> Billington, p. 238-242 and 710 n. 65.

fostered by Plato's theory of Ideas and its mystic development in Neoplatonism. One of his dialogues is entitled *Alcibiades*. His interpretation of the Bible is wholly aligned to the allegorical interpretation of Origen and Clement of Alexandria.<sup>32</sup>

In his philosophy Skovoroda distinguished between two "natures": visible or external (*vneshnyaya*) nature over against invisible or internal (*vutrennyaya*) nature, creation over against creator. The aim of human endeavour was to expose invisible nature through visible nature. This aim could be realized by observing the ancient Greek maxim "Know thyself". The result of this observance was the discovery of the "human being of the heart" (*serdechny chelovek*). Not everybody was capable of this on their own, but the philosopher could offer a helping hand by means of his spiritual midwifery: the Russian Socrates.

Diametrically opposed to the mystic-idealistic criticism of Skovoroda is the highly concrete-materialistic criticism of Radishchev. He too was an admirer of Plato, and with Plato, but unlike Skovoroda, who was not interested in social philosophy, he admired Sparta. In this regard he is an heir of the French "philosophes", particularly of Helvetius and Gabriel Bonnet Abbé de Mably, whose ideas rank him with the direct precursors of the French Revolution and whose work Radishchev probably read during his years as a student (at public expense) at the University of Leipzig (1766-1771). In any case, as early as 1773 in St Petersburg, he published a Russian translation of Mably's *Observations sur l'histoire de la Grèce* (Geneva 1766). The translation is rather free, but the most remarkable feature is the commentary which Radishchev took the liberty of adding to his translation and which passed the censor without the slightest problem. In this commentary he called absolutism "the system most repugnant to human nature" and claimed that "unjust actions of the sovereign give the people as his judges the same or even a greater authority than that which the law awards to the sovereign in the adjudication of criminals".<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. V.F. Bochanovsky, *Bogoiskateli*, St Petersburg-Moscow 1911; Chr. Read, *Religion, Revolution and the Russian Intelligentsia 1900-1912. The Vekhi Debate and its Intellectual Background*, London-New York 1975, esp. p. 14, 24, 88-92.

<sup>33</sup> A.N. Radishchev, *Polnoe sobranie sochin.*, Moscow-Leningrad 1941, p. 282.



In 1781-1783, inspired by the American War of Independence, Radishchev wrote his "Ode to Freedom" (*Volnost*), which was extolled by later Soviet tradition as the first expression of truly revolutionary poetry.<sup>34</sup> In his next work, the anonymously published *Journey from St Petersburg to Moscow* from 1790, Brutus was still one of his heroes. But this journey went much too far for Catherine, and she intervened: she regarded Radishchev as even more dangerous than Pugachev. The author was tracked down, accused of lese-majesty, condemned to death by the senate, reprieved by the empress, and then dragged in chains to Siberia, the first in a long line of intellectual dissidents. After Catherine's death he regained his freedom. In the last years of his life he occupied himself with matters relating to poetics: his essay *Monument for a dactylotrochaic knight* from 1801-1802 is the first treatise on aspects of Russian prosody since Tredyakovsky. In 1802 he committed suicide. His *Journey* was not reprinted until 1905. The original edition of 1790 had been destroyed except for a few copies.

Radishchev's *Monument* for the knight can, in a certain sense, be regarded as a contribution to the Russian version of the "querelle des anciens et modernes".<sup>35</sup> In what follows the balance in the appreciation of the "anciens" and the "modernes" will primarily be considered from a non-literary vantage-point. That vantage-point is what used to be called Senate Square and is today called Decembrists Square, in St Petersburg of course. In the first place it offers a view of the equestrian statue of Peter the Great: Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman*, placed there during Catherine's reign. Its maker was a Frenchman: Etienne-Maurice Falconet.

"Avez-vous jamais entendu parler de M. Falconet?"

On 28 December 1827 Stendhal paid a visit to the Capitol during one of his walks through Rome. There stood the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. In a note to his account of this walk Stendhal remarks that Falconet had written a book against the statue and that Diderot (who even compared Falconet to Phidias) had pre-

<sup>34</sup> Text in *Poln. sobr. sochin.*, vol. i, Moscow-Leningrad 1938, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> Karen Rosenberg, "The Quarrel between Ancients and Moderns", in: A.G. Cross, p. 196-205.

dicted that Falconet's name would become immortal. "That is now sixty years ago. Have you ever heard of Mr. Falconet?"<sup>36</sup>

Stendhal would have nothing of Falconet and called his reflections on the fine arts mere "sottises", nonsense. He was irritated by the tone in which such an obscure artist took the liberty of passing judgement on the greatest masters.<sup>37</sup> Stendhal, however, was wrong, as anyone will find who takes the trouble to test Stendhal's opinion against his or her own reading of Falconet's writings. Falconet was a sculptor, not a writer, and so his prose is feverish rather than chiselled and polished like that of Stendhal. But there is one point which he rightly urges with great insistence: from antiquity onwards there have always been figures, notably men of letters, for instance Cicero, who without any true competence in the field have imposed on their public all kinds of groundless and frequently mistaken opinions on products of the visual arts; and it is owing to this dilettantism that many of these products have received the predicate "classical". Falconet did regard himself as competent, as indeed he was. He had, besides, a rather short-tempered and irascible character and so he lashed out at all the unordained priests of art criticism. Among these unqualified persons he also counted his friend Diderot.

In the context of Falconet's farther-reaching irritation about incompetent judges (Winckelmann being one of these, according to Falconet), the polemic between Falconet and Diderot specifically focussed on the statue of Marcus Aurelius, the bronze horseman of the Capitol. His *Observations sur la statue de Marc-Aurèle, adressées à M. Diderot*, St Petersburg 1770, also published in Amsterdam in 1771, runs to almost two hundred pages in the first volume of his six-volume *Oeuvres*; the first two hundred and twenty-four pages of the second volume are also mainly occupied with Marcus Aurelius.<sup>38</sup> One cannot blame Diderot for finally acknowledging defeat: "Dear friend, let us stop talking about that horse of Marcus Aurelius. Whether it is beautiful or ugly, what do I really care? I do not know its maker and I am not in the least interested in his work. Let us rather discuss your work". This is how Diderot starts a letter to Falconet, dated 6 December 1773. The

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<sup>36</sup> Stendhal, *Voyages en Italie*, textes établis, présentés et annotés par V. del Litto, Paris (Pléiade) 1973, p. 735.

<sup>37</sup> Stendhal, p. 676.

<sup>38</sup> E.-M. Falconet, *Oeuvres*, vol. i, Lausanne 1781, p. 157-384; vol. ii, p. 1-224.

letter was written in St Petersburg, to which city Diderot had travelled early in June 1773 at Catherine's invitation. Slightly further on in the same letter Diderot promises never to pass another judgement on any sculpture, but in that case he, Falconet, will have to provide "un sublime monument", which in execution and in all respects must answer to the "noblesse et grandeur" of its conception.<sup>39</sup>

It was not only Diderot who needed to be converted; the whole world had to be converted from dilettantism and the "antico-manía" which it had encouraged. Hence Falconet also wrote an extensive commentary on Pliny the Elder's three books on the visual arts (XXXIV-XXXVI).<sup>40</sup>

Why in fact did Falconet get so excited about "that horse of Marcus Aurelius"? Through Diderot's mediation he had come to St Petersburg in the autumn of 1766 to work on a monument for Peter the Great—Imperator Peter the Great—commissioned by Catherine. In 1761 Elizabeth Petrovna had already ordered the casting of a bronze statue of Peter as a Roman emperor on horseback, after a design by Rastrelli, but that statue did not answer to Catherine's artistic ideal and, what is more, she could not link her name to it. The artist had to be a Frenchman. Falconet's offer was substantially lower than all the others, and he also enjoyed the active support of Diderot. One condition made was that he would have to reside in St Petersburg, so that by his example he could gather a following among Russian apprentices.

Falconet was immediately made a "free honorary member" of the Academy of Arts (founded in 1758), and Catherine allowed to him to associate with her on an equal footing ("n'employez aucune formalité, surtout n'allongez point les lignes par des épithètes dont je ne me soucie pas"). It was all very auspicious.

But in the Academy, and also, for that matter, outside of it, Falconet rapidly came into conflict with old Ivan Betskoi, who liked to see himself as the cultural high priest of Russia and of whom it was even whispered that he was the natural father of Catherine's deposed husband Peter III. Falconet refused to recognize that it was

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<sup>39</sup> In Falconet, *Oeuvres* ii, p. 132-140; cf. H. Dieckmann and J. Seznec, "The Horse of Marcus Aurelius. A Controversy between Diderot and Falconet", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 15 (1952), p. 198-228; H. Dieckmann, "An Unpublished Notice of Diderot on Falconet", *ibidem*, p.257f.

<sup>40</sup> *Oeuvres*, vols. iii and iv.

not tactical to take too high a tone when dealing with a seasoned courtier like Betskoi. The resulting conflicts led to Falconet's premature departure from St Petersburg in 1778. He did not even take leave of Catherine. The monument had already been cast, but would only be installed and unveiled in 1782, though during this interval nothing was done to detract from Falconet's artistic wishes and intentions.<sup>41</sup> These wishes and intentions had caused Falconet to clash head-on with Betskoi and others, and it was this that provoked his extensive criticism of the bronze horseman of the Capitol, for it was taken for granted by everybody that the statue of Marcus Aurelius was the most beautiful thing imaginable and that one could only try to come close to this ideal by imitating it humbly and faithfully. Falconet regarded this as a typically dilettante view, and he made no attempt to disguise the fact. In this he concurred with the hardly flattering judgement of Charles Perrault, the very man who from 1687 onwards had been responsible for truly setting ablaze the "querelle" in France with his poem on *Le siècle de Louis le Grand* and his *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* and who had dared to call the horse of Marcus Aurelius, with its broad and swollen flanks, a breeding-mare, "une jument poulinière": "that poor emperor must have jammed his legs open in the most horrible way on such a horse".<sup>42</sup> Luckily for Falconet he could count on the support of his patroness in the decisive early years of his design. In May 1768 Catherine wrote to Falconet: "Listen, forget that statue of Marcus Aurelius and the stupid arguments of people who understand nothing about anything and carry on as you see fit. You will do much better to persist in your own stubbornness".<sup>43</sup>

Catherine's support was probably motivated by non-artistic considerations as well, for Marcus Aurelius was very popular as a philosopher among the Russian classicists. In his theatre Sumarokov made a determined effort to interest his public in the ethics of the Stoa, with its emphasis on reasonableness, duty, and community interest. On the occasion of a visit by Elizabeth Petrovna to Kiev he had written a moralizing piece on Marcus Aurelius in 1774. Fonvizin wrote an elegy on Marcus Aurelius in the same

<sup>41</sup> Louis Réau, *Etienne-Marie Falconet 1716-1791*, Paris 1922, p. 81, 84f., 94-98, 103f.

<sup>42</sup> Fully quoted by Réau, p. 342.

<sup>43</sup> Réau, p. 353.

vein in 1771. La Harpe presented Marcus Aurelius in plain terms as a model emperor to Catherine in his 1784 memorandum on the education of the later Czar Alexander I. Catherine did not think this adulation of “the Stoic on the throne” altogether recommendable; she preferred a kind of Epicurean view of enlightened self-interest as the principle of her ethics to some or other belief in a higher reality, and so the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius did not belong to her favourite reading.<sup>44</sup>

In any case Falconet was free to do as he liked, and he went against Betskoi and the academic conception in not wishing to represent Peter as a triumphant aggressor in ancient dress. “After all, I don’t represent Scipio or Caesar or Pompey in a Russian caftan or a French justaucorps either, do I?”, he wrote to Diderot. His Peter was a pioneer of reforms and legislation, a peaceloving prince: “Mon Czar ne tient point un bâton; il étend sa main droite bienfaisante sur son pays qu’il parcourt. Il franchit ce rocher qui lui sert de base: emblème des difficultés qu’il surmonte ... Ainsi cette main paternelle, ce galop sur cette roche escarpée, voilà le sujet que Pierre le Grand me donne”. “Perhaps the Czar would ask me why I have not placed a sabre in his hand? It seems to me that during his life he brandished his sabre much too often, and a sculptor should only bring out those aspects of his character which redound to his honour and throw a veil over the deviations and faults which tarnish his reputation”.<sup>45</sup>

The pithiness of Falconet’s view is perhaps best expressed by the inscription on the pedestal, in Latin on the west side, and translated in Russian on the east side for all the Russians who had no Latin. Whether this placement was deliberate I cannot say, but certainly it is symbolic. In any case a variety of poetasters had thought up grandiloquent rubbish. The least exceptionable efforts were the two inscriptions proposed by Diderot. One in a kind of rhythmical prose:

Petro nomine primo monumentum consecravit

Catharina nomine secunda,

and a kind of distich:

Conatu enormi saxum enorme advexit

Et subiecit pedibus herois rediviva virtus.

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<sup>44</sup> Billington, p. 235f. and 710 n. 58-60.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Réau, p. 356ff.

Once again Falconet got the better of the literati, this time on their home ground. His abridgement of Diderot's first inscription is brilliant:

PETRO Primo

CATHARINA Secunda.

"Catherine to Peter, the Second to the First."

The statue had already been placed on its pedestal—an enormous rock of Karelian granite—before Catherine had been able to express her approval. "C'est le style lapidaire le plus simple et le meilleur que les Anciens aient employé pour les inscriptions de leurs monuments. Mais grâce aux beaux esprits subalternes et modernes, on fait des inscriptions à tour de bras où le bavardage n'est point épargné, tandis qu'un mot de génie suffirait". Thus wrote Falconet to Catherine on 14 August 1770. And he added: "If it does not please you, Madam, then tell me what your intentions are". It pleased Catherine.<sup>46</sup>

"Falconet was fighting for the freedom of expression of his artistic genius." The result of that fight was his "modern" equestrian statue of Peter the Great. "As we look at the monument and see Peter charge upon the huge rock, we see Falconet's triumphant, victorious liberation from all the things he rejected in neo-classicism and tradition".<sup>47</sup>

This is put rather rhetorically, but not incorrectly. To strive for a reputation does not provide a reputation, to comply with the expectations of others merely ensures a pseudo-reputation, to insist on one's own ability and will is the only way for someone who wishes to win. Falconet won, and was consequently far ahead of his contemporaries. How far? About fifty years, so far as this can be measured by considering when it is that the next genius reappears—Pushkin—who fights his way to victory in a similar way. But perhaps Pushkin was far ahead of his time as well. Both belong to that small legion of free spirits of whom it can be said that "their time" is always late.

At the same time it would be wrong to think that Falconet thought *all* art from antiquity outdated and objectionable. For him there were only two kinds of art: good art and bad art. Unlike the

<sup>46</sup> Réau, p. 362f. ; for more information on Falconet from the Russian point of view see V. Stasov, "Tre frantsuzkikh skulptora v Rossii", *Drevnyaya i Novaya Rossiya* 3 (1877), no. 4, p. 329-344.

<sup>47</sup> Dieckmann and Seznec, p. 207.

out and out classicists, he did not see this distinction as coinciding with the distinction between ancient and modern. Modern art was sometimes good and sometimes bad, as was ancient art, and Falconet claimed the right to decide for himself, on the basis of considerations of artistic competence, what was good and what was bad, without incompetent literary men laying down the law to him through their pompous parroting of so-called authoritative views of Cicero or Pliny or Winckelmann or anybody. Ivan Betskoi might think that he knew about art, but Ivan Betskoi was blind and the horse of Marcus Aurelius was all wrong. And that was final. Voilà M. Falconet. Anyone who disagreed with him was viciously boxed on the ears with an appropriate quotation from Quintilian: "There are none worse than those, who as soon as they have progressed beyond a knowledge of the alphabet delude themselves into the belief that they are the possessors of real knowledge. For they disdain to stoop to the drudgery of teaching, and conceiving that they have acquired a certain title to authority—a frequent source of vanity in such persons—become imperious or even brutal in instilling a thorough dose of their own folly."<sup>48</sup>

Other bad examples according to Falconet were Trajan's Column in Rome, the Niobe group of the Uffizi Museum in Florence, the Farnese Bull of the National Museum in Naples, and the Furietti Centauri of the Capitoline Museum in Rome. These were thoroughly ridiculed by Falconet.<sup>49</sup> But there are more examples of ancient sculptures which he did think good or even admired: the Venus de' Medici of the Uffizi Museum, the Farnese Hercules of the National Museum in Naples, the Castor and Pollux of the Prado in Madrid, the Hermaphrodite (on the marble mattress which all tourists feel compelled to squeeze because it looks so real) and the Borghese Gladiator of the Louvre in Paris, and of course the Apollo Belvedere, the Belvedere Torso, the Antinous Belvedere, and the Laocoön group, all in the Vatican.<sup>50</sup>

Falconet also approved of Catherine's endeavour to gather as many copies of ancient sculptures in St Petersburg as possible,

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<sup>48</sup> Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria*, English translation by H.E. Butler (Loeb Classical Library), i 1, 8. Quoted by Falconet: *Oeuvres* i, p. 157.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *Oeuvres* i, p. 266-273.

<sup>50</sup> Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique. The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900*, New Haven 1981, p. 91, 129, 178, 221, 224.

either for the Academy of Arts or for the parks. The sight of the copy of the Apollo Belvedere even moved him to tears.<sup>51</sup> There was, for that matter, and still is, a copy of this statue in the Apollo Colonnade in the park of Pavlovsk and copies of virtually all classical sculptures can be found in the parks of St Petersburg and Leningrad and environs. Of the above statues the same park in Pavlovsk also contained a complete Niobe group, and the visitor to Petrodvorets today will even find two copies of the Borghese Gladiator there: they are symmetrically positioned at the edge of the basin of the great cascade at the main entrance of the palace. In general the copying of ancient statues from Western Europe to embellish St Petersburg and Russia compares in nature and scale with the copying in antiquity itself of Greek statues to embellish Rome—the difference being that the Romans, owing to their predominant political power, did not need to confine themselves to copying alone: systematic art robbery is not something that started with Napoleon.

Already in 1827 Falconet was an obscure figure for Stendhal. How much does his name mean today? With all respect and sympathy for Falconet, one wonders whether his monument for Peter the Great would have remained so famous if Pushkin had not written his poem *The Bronze Horseman*. It is his last great narrative poem, and according to many his best. It was written in October 1833 (a few days later Pushkin completed his *History of Pugachev*), but its history goes back a lot farther. To tell the story of the poem is inevitably to do it injustice, but I am forced to do so for the coherence of my argument. The story takes its starting-point in a contemporary historical event, the flooding of St Petersburg by the Neva in November 1824, and is divided into an introduction, a first part, and a second part. The introduction is the only part of the poem that was allowed to be printed in Pushkin's lifetime. In many ways it is reminiscent of the quotation from Batyushkov's *Walk to the Academy of Arts* at the beginning of this chapter: Peter is standing on the bank of the Neva, surveys the desolate landscape, and decides to build a city there, a "window to Europe". This is followed by an enthusiastic encomium of Peter the Great and the St Petersburg of Pushkin, who is openly proud of

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<sup>51</sup> *Oeuvres* iv, p. 126 n.



the militant aspect of the new city. Even the elements have been subdued and are ready to make peace. But this is only an illusion.

In the first part the elements retaliate and the city is flooded. The main character is introduced, the minor civil servant Evgeny, a humble, poor, hard-working man, quietly hoping for an honourable and free existence, a few more brains, and a slightly higher salary. He is lying in his bed and cannot sleep because of the storm. He reflects that, owing to the flood, he will not be able to see his sweetheart Parasha for a few days: she lives on the other side of the river. He is worried about her, but finally falls asleep. The storm rages on and the city is inundated. The following morning the water subsides. Evgeny goes into the city, rescue operations get underway at the emperor's command, and Evgeny ends up on a marble lion (a copy of one of the two Medici Lions—one ancient, the other in turn a copy made by Flaminio Vacca in 1594—from the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence)<sup>52</sup> on Senate Square, which is still flooded, with the back of the Bronze Horseman turned towards him, the majestic statue of the founder of the proud city whose praises were sung in the introduction.

In part two the damage is assessed and Evgeny sees his anxious premonitions confirmed: the house of his loved one has been swallowed up and swept away by the storm. Normal life resumes, but not for Evgeny. He cannot get over the loss of his Parasha, becomes alienated from the world, loses his senses, and wanders through the city for weeks and months on end. At one point he is back at the marble lion on Senate Square, with the back of the Bronze Horseman turned towards him. Evgeny—briefly returned to his senses—recognizes the place with a shiver. He addresses the lion: "Where do you gallop, proud steed, and where will you plant your hoofs?" He runs towards the statue as if possessed by the devil, announces his revenge to the bronze horseman, and quickly runs away. But the emperor pursues him on his horse, and all night Evgeny runs madly through the city, continually hearing the hoofs of the horse close behind him clattering on the pavement. Whenever he comes near to Senate Square on subsequent occasions, he is afraid of being pursued again, and to ward off this threat he doffs his hat to the statue, humbly fixes his eyes

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<sup>52</sup> Haskell and Penny, p. 249; A.N. Petrov, E.A. Borisova, A.P. Naumenko, *Pamyatniki arkhitekturi Leningrada*, Leningrad 1958, p. 163.

on the ground, and skirts the square. Later his body is found in the place where Parasha used to live.<sup>53</sup>

The peaceloving prince whom Falconet believed he had represented unambiguously, a sovereign who gives his horse the reins at a free and easy gallop, has turned into the opposite in the literary tradition, a ruthless and inhuman demon of power. Falconet was consciously unwilling to represent a defeated opponent under the horse's raised hoofs (as in all likelihood there originally had been with the bronze horseman of the Capitol, according to Montfaucon).<sup>54</sup> But in Pushkin it is Evgeny who is trampled under the hoofs and who, in a fit of clairvoyant rage, wonders who will be the next victim. The men of letters did not abide by Falconet's version.

This does not yet apply to Batyushkov. He remained faithful to Falconet: the anonymous "young artist" who supplies the two older gentleman in the *Walk* with the necessary explanations plainly prefers the bronze horseman of Senate Square to that of the Capitol. He thinks the former is much more "alive, fiery, lofty, bold". But there is no clear reference to Falconet's conception of Peter as a peaceloving prince. "He is galloping, just like Russia", the young artist remarks. Joseph de Maistre already took a different view: he mentions the statue on one of the first pages of the first "entretien" (July 1809) of *Les soirées de Saint-Petersbourg*. Falconet had written: "Mon Czar ne tient point un bâton, il étend sa main droite *bienfaisante*, ... cette main *paternelle*, sur son pays qu'il parcourt". In de Maistre the same right hand is "un bras *terrible*", "... et l'on ne sait pas si cette main de bronze protège ou menace".

But it is not until Mickiewicz that we see a really significant change. Adam Bernard Mickiewicz (1798-1855), born in Lithuania, is the highly patriotic "national poet" of Poland, who, with almost messianic fervour, did more than any other intellectual in his country to preserve the Polish cultural and national identity after the three partitions under Catherine and the unsuccessful revolt of 1830-1831. He was the most explicit and the most polemic in his opposition to Falconet's conception of Peter as a peaceloving prince, an opposition which he formulated in a poem entitled *The*

<sup>53</sup> Alexander Pushkin, *The Bronze Horseman and Other Poems*, translated with an introduction by D.M. Thomas, Harmondsworth (Penguin) 1982, p. 247-257.

<sup>54</sup> Bernard de Montfaucon, *Diarium Italicum*, Paris 1702, p. 301 n. 27.

*monument of Peter the Great*. Together with five other poems of protest this poem forms the so-called "Digression" in Mickiewicz's main work *Forefathers' Eve (Dziady)*, part III.<sup>55</sup> The theme of this part (a kind of dramatic autobiography) is closely connected with the arrest in 1823 of Mickiewicz and a number of other students of the University of Vilnius, who, united in the organizations of the so-called Philomaths and Aretophiles, had protested against the suppression of Poland by the Russians. Mickiewicz was banished to Russia from 1824 to 1829 (he was later allowed to settle in Western Europe, though not in Poland), and as an exile spent part of this time in St Petersburg. There he wrote his "Digression", which he then dedicated "to his Russian Friends", *Przyjaciolom Moskalom*. "Russian" is here the translation, the usual translation, of the Polish *Moskalom*. But this word has a hidden meaning which has disappeared in the translation: the underlying meaning of *Przyjaciolom Moskalom* is "to his Enemies Friends".<sup>56</sup>

Pushkin was one of these dubious friends, and his *Bronze Horseman* is the answer, so to speak, to Mickiewicz's *Monument of Peter the Great*, of which I will now summarize the contents.

Two young men are standing hand in hand under one cape in the rain at night. One is an unknown stranger from the West, "victim of the power of the czar" (Mickiewicz himself), the other is "the famous Russian bard" (Pushkin). They are standing in Senate Square in St Petersburg, at the foot of the equestrian statue of Peter the Great. The bard offers his friend an explanation of the monument: it was erected by Catherine, the pedestal is a lump of granite from Finland, transported to its destination with great difficulty, etcetera. And now Peter stands here, "a Russian czar in a Roman toga, he rules with the whip". The bard goes on to compare the monument with the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius and now it is the Roman emperor who is praised as a peaceloving sovereign: he has just repelled a dangerous invasion and is now returning home; calm, composed, mindful of the happiness of his subjects, he slowly enters the city, peaceful Rome. He extends his right arm in a fatherly gesture, as if to bless his people, and with his left hand he leisurely restrains his otherwise so fiery horse.

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<sup>55</sup> English translation by Marjorie Beatrice Peacock in: G.R. Noyes (ed.), *Poems by Adam Mickiewicz*, New York 1944, p. 337-368; also in Lednicki, p. 109-139.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Lednicki, p. 101 and 137 n. 44.

How different the situation here: Peter gives his horse the reins, the animal seems out of its senses, it will fall any moment. There it stands, imprisoned in its gallop like a waterfall suspended during a severe winter. "But soon the sun of freedom will shine and the westerly wind will warm this country. Will the waterfall of tyranny then remain frozen?"

Mickiewicz has put this explication into Pushkin's mouth. My concern here is not to examine the relationship between imagination and reality in this poem (did Mickiewicz and Pushkin really stand talking together at the foot of the monument?).<sup>57</sup> Nor is it my aim to discuss Mickiewicz in great detail. But it is clear that Mickiewicz puts an interpretation on the monument which is entirely different from what Falconet intended and that he prefers Marcus Aurelius, if on entirely different grounds from Ivan Betskoi and all those other opponents of Falconet, and it is also clear that Mickiewicz does this purposefully. "His antiquity" is the idealized antiquity of the "rebels" from the time of the French Revolution and from the time of classicistic Romanticism.

In the coordinate system of action and reaction introduced earlier on in this chapter we find Falconet and Mickiewicz together on the axis of action. Another example in which dreamed and idealized antiquity is set against the contemporary age as a source of bitterness and rebelliousness is the poem *St Petersburg*, which precedes the poem about the monument of Peter the Great in the "Digression". How did Athens, Sparta, Rome originate? Mickiewicz's answer in this poem is purely arcadian: people sought peace and quiet at the foot of a temple, in a sacred wood, at the spring of a wood nymph, or sought a place of refuge on a hill. But how did the Russian capital originate, and in such an inhospitable place too, where the icy wind brings only snow and rain and where the climate is as haughty and capricious as a despot? The answer is easily guessed: St Petersburg is not a city of human beings, it is the cold product of a tyrant's heartless whims, a tyrant who insisted on having his own imitation Paris, imitation Amsterdam, imitation Venice all rolled in one.

And in the poem *The Suburbs of the Capital*, which precedes *St Petersburg*, the imitation statues in the parks of the country

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Lednicki, p. 11-41, esp. 25-28; John Bayley, *Pushkin. A Comparative Commentary*, Cambridge 1971, p. 130-141.

residences of the nobility are compared to exotic animals who have been kidnapped from their land of origin and caged here. To be able to raise these palaces, these luxurious brothels, out of the mire, cruel servants of the czars have brought upon us an ocean of blood and tears, *our* blood and *our* tears! How different it was in ancient Rome: if a theatre had to be built there, the people provided a *river of gold*! To this final statement Mickiewicz adds the learned footnote that “these words were spoken by *the king of the Goths* [the emphasis is Mickiewicz’s, who evidently wishes to point out that even a Gothic barbarian from the period of the migration of the Germanic peoples had more sense of culture than Peter], when he first saw the Colosseum in Rome”. No source is acknowledged, but this is no problem, since few Gothic kings saw the Colosseum in Rome. The king to whose visit Mickiewicz is alluding here is the Ostrogothic King Theodoric the Great, who paid a state visit to Rome in 500. Mickiewicz knew this from his reading of Gibbon and the latter’s description of that visit: “.. he [Theodoric] vaguely computed, that a *river of gold* must have been drained to erect the colossal amphitheatre of Titus” (i.e. the Colosseum).<sup>58</sup> Nowhere does Gibbon say that this “river of gold” was *spontaneously* yielded by the Roman *people*. Mickiewicz is mythologizing.

Mickiewicz made his erudition, in this case his knowledge of Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, subservient to “his message”, in this case his indictment against Russian tyranny. He did not search for authentic sources from antiquity itself, as it later was and hitherto has been required of the accurate scholar. I am aware that we are dealing with a poem and not with a scientific dissertation on how theatre-building was financed in ancient Rome. Yet there is reason to dig down one level deeper, because in this way, with the help of a concrete example, it can be made clear how mythologization is encouraged by a lack of scientific method.

The point is this. Mickiewicz derived his information on the king of the Goths from Gibbon. He presents it as a piece of learning, as science. He also puts it in a footnote, not in the poem itself. Mickiewicz was a classical scholar. In 1839 he was appointed

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<sup>58</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. by J.B. Bury, vol. iv, 7th ed., London 1931, p. 190.

Professor of Latin in the University of Lausanne (where, incidentally, he did not stay long: a year later he accepted an invitation—as the first in a long line—to become Professor of Russian Literature at the Collège de France; in 1844 he was dismissed from this position on political grounds). Although a classicist and Latinist, Mickiewicz saw no need to check the ancient source on which Gibbon's description of Theodoric's visit to Rome was based. Had he done so, he would never have painted such an idyllic picture of theatre-building in Rome. He would have discovered that Gibbon used a passage from a letter from Theodoric to the Roman Consul Flavius Maximus in A.D. 523.<sup>59</sup> The letter is about the Colosseum, then still called the Amphitheatrum Flavium. The "shows" which were staged in this theatre (and thus the building itself) are condemned in this letter in the strongest terms: they constitute an "actus detestabilis", a "certamen infelix", and so on. The concluding sentence is still worth quoting today: "If people had any sense of justice, they would use all those enormous sums which they squander in order to send people to their death [namely in gladiator fights and the like] to preserve life".

The passage used by Gibbon reads: "Hoc Titi potentia principalis *divitiarum profuso flumine* cogitavit aedificium fieri". In translation: "This building was constructed at the initiative of Emperor Titus, [literally:] a *river of riches* being poured out". The Gothic king wrote the letter in reply to a request to invest state earnings in the restoration of the Colosseum. The king was far from keen on the idea and frankly spoke his mind about what he regarded as the pointless and objectionable shedding of blood which took place there and which was apparently such an indispensable source of entertainment for the Roman people. Gibbon transplanted the sentence from the letter from 523 to the thoughts in Theodoric's mind during his visit to Rome twenty-three years earlier ("He vaguely computed that a river of gold ...", etc.). This is a literary trick which has little to do with historical-scientific method. Of course, the letter says nothing about a spontaneous popular financing scheme. Altogether the letter is simply devastating to any romantic conception of ancient Rome. Nor is this an isolated case.

The moral is that mythologization and idealization of antiquity

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<sup>59</sup> Cassiodorus, *Variae* v 42, ed. Th. Mommsen, Berlin 1894, p. 168ff.

become more difficult as antiquity is studied more scientifically. The antiquity which could be set against the contemporary age as a kind of lost paradise and shining example—as Mickiewicz did in this case—never existed. Here too faith and science are irreconcilable. The antiquity which was so often a source of inspiration in the bid to recover this lost paradise, proves on scientific examination to be a mirage, and in the long run mirages are an ineffective perspective for finding a way out of the desert.

Mickiewicz studied classical languages during his stay at the University of Vilnius (1815-1819). From 1819 until his arrest in 1823 he was a teacher in Kovno. Is there a relationship between his studies and his political and literary activities?

I shall deal with this question briefly, since it goes beyond the scope of an inquiry into the classical tradition in Russia. However, what has been said so far about Mickiewicz and his poems justifies the hypothesis that antiquity, or rather his view of antiquity, was one of the elements, and more than accidentally so, which fostered his attitude of rebellion.

Mickiewicz's teacher in archeology and classical languages was a certain Ernst Gottfried Groddeck.<sup>60</sup> Groddeck is the father of Polish *Allertumswissenschaft*. He was born in Gdansk in 1762 as the son of an erudite father (an Orientalist) and the grandson of a councillor and judge. He studied in Gottingen from 1782 to 1786, and published a prize-winning treatise on suicide (*Commentarius de morte voluntaria*). Herder secured a position for him as a private tutor of Greek and Latin at the court of the influential Polish Prince Adam Kasimierz Czartoryski. Thanks to Czartoryski Groddeck was the leading professor in the University of Vilnius from 1804 onwards, as was his teacher Christian Gottlob Heyne in the University of Gottingen, the difference being that Groddeck's importance is mainly to be sought in the field of literature, including contemporary Polish literature. Groddeck's influence manifested itself in his contribution to the opposition against the pseudo-classicism imported from France, the propagation of a new and more "natural" view of antiquity, and the stimulation of Polish Romanticism.

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<sup>60</sup> See Bursian on Groddeck in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. ix, Leipzig 1897, p. 707f.; Anton Szantyr in the *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. vii, Berlin 1966, p. 103f.

Groddeck was very popular with his students. He was a scholar, an admirer of antiquity, a zealous patriot, and for all that an affable man. His second-most famous pupil was the historian Joachim Lelewel (1786-1861; Professor of History in Vilnius 1815-1818 and 1821-1824), a "Jacobin" who was sentenced to death *in contumaciam* for his active role in the revolt against Russia (the sentence was not carried out) and during his subsequent exile in Western Europe became the leader of the moderately left-wing democrats—"Young Poland" (*Młoda Polska*), 1834-1836, affiliated with Mazzini's "Young Europe"—and founded the *Internationale Demokratische Gesellschaft* in 1848 together with Marx.

Groddeck died in 1823, the year in which his most famous pupil, Adam Mickiewicz, was arrested and then exiled to Russia. And that brings us back to Pushkin. But first a different matter: how did the light of the Enlightenment shine through in science, the science of antiquity?



### CHAPTER THREE

#### DIAMONDS FOR SCHOLARSHIP: THE BIRTH OF "ALTPHILOLOGIE" IN RUSSIA

What is Enlightenment?

A diamond ring, presented on 1 August 1803, as a dazzling testimony to the Most Gracious Benevolence of His Imperial Majesty Alexander I, to the editor of a new *Novum Testamentum Graecum*. A second diamond ring, presented on 17 June 1805 to the discoverer and publisher of a fragment of Sophocles' tragedy *Clytemnestra*, thought lost. A third diamond ring, presented on 20 September 1806 to the editor of the *opuscula et fragmenta* of Rufus of Ephesus, *clarissimus medicus Graecus*. A fourth diamond ring, presented on 2 September 1808 to the editor of the *opuscula et fragmenta* of twenty-one physicians from Greek antiquity. This is Enlightenment, thought giver, receiver, onlookers, and descendants, and they considered themselves and each other wise and fortunate. The fact that in 1807 a young man aged twenty-two could conclusively prove on the basis of linguistic, metrical, and other deficiencies that the fragment (340 lines, and therefore sensational indeed) of the *Clytemnestra* could by no stretch of the imagination be by Sophocles does not detract from the glory of the moment, although it was, of course, a pity for the young man that he did not receive a diamond ring.

What do these tributes show? In the first place they show the high respect in which scholarship was held by the authorities, in particular the scholarly study of antiquity through the publication of Greek and Latin texts. Second, this respect was clearly also indicative of the need to be taken seriously in a world where the culture of power found its legitimation in the power of culture. In this legitimation scholarship was the jewel in the crown, the confirmation of sovereign authority. In short, the tributes were for services rendered. This is meant as a statement of fact, not as a criticism.

Nor is this a fact which applies to the Russian Empire alone. Science is only possible where it is made possible by power and

wealth, and it is not surprising that most science has effectively, if not intentionally, been in the nature of services rendered. If these services are rendered to a higher authority—whether the sovereign or the people is basically irrelevant—an authority which is prepared to allow utopia to prevail in some measure over ideology, there is a chance that a radically critical professor will not be immediately requested or compelled to vacate his chair. But even in a society which calls itself democratic, the radical is not always automatically tolerated. Throughout the history of science the number of cases in which the power of culture has openly resisted the power of authority is relatively small, just as in general the definition of culture as the art of saying no has always been a minority position.

Further, no scholar or scientist can be expected to act the revolutionary merely because the earth is a vale of tears. Scholarship, the attempt to establish what the original text of the New Testament may have looked like, or the publication of an unknown fragment of an unknown tragedy by Sophocles, also has an intrinsic value, which has nothing to do with the question of who makes scholarship possible, who profits from it, what aim is pursued with it, or what effect is achieved with it.

Finally, scholars are only human. That is to say that they are tied to the values and views which are held to be good and true in their environment. The few who question these values and views in an essential way (i.e. not just because it looks good "to adopt a critical attitude"), they are the people who provide the dynamics in the history of culture. Let us take the example—not an arbitrary one—of the Leipzig philosopher and theologian Johann August Ernesti (1707-1781). He was a man of great erudition, a man of outstanding importance in the theological faculty of the University of Leipzig at the time of Frederick the Great. He was wholly convinced that knowledge of antiquity was the only guarantee for true *humanitas*. Anyone who wished to master this *humanitas* was best advised to consult Cicero. This was nothing new.

Ernesti's originality lay in the fact that he kept on insisting that the reading of the ancient authors (for him, child of his time, the time just before the neo-Humanism of Winckelmann and Goethe with its "discovery" of ancient Greece, these were above all the Latin authors) was not to focus on grammar and morphology, but on content. He organized his teaching accordingly. Its aim was

not a perfect command of the language, but an understanding of the content, and this aim was in turn instrumental to the student's ultimate goal: to learn to form one's own judgement. The education in the classics thus served an emancipatory purpose.

What was the result of this noble endeavour in Ernesti's own case? What about his *own* judgement? His work on the philology of the New Testament and the Church Fathers offers the best test. He held the view that these sacred texts could and should only be read in one way, namely simply in their literal meaning. He dismissed therefore the juggling, the dizzy vanishing tricks of allegorical interpretation, which (already in antiquity itself) had originated as a means of keeping doubtful believers on the straight and narrow path. On the other hand he held on to the belief in the inspired character of the biblical writings—it was *God's* word—and he respected the miracles as facts. Little wonder that his scholarly work is more conservative in its results than one might expect on the basis of his starting-point.<sup>1</sup>

Back to the four diamond rings. Whose fingers did they actually adorn?

On 7 March 1744 an unknown trumpeter of the company of the otherwise unknown Rittmaster Rüdiger—the company was probably just passing through—registered the birth of a son with the minister of the village of Gröst, not far from Merseberg in Thuringia. The mother is not mentioned in the church register, which is unusual. The son was entered under the name of Christian Friedrich Matthaei. The name Matthaei is found nowhere else in the area. Of his childhood we know that he attended the Kreuzschule in Dresden from 1754 and that he enrolled as a student at the University of Leipzig in 1763.<sup>2</sup> There he read some

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<sup>1</sup> *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 4, Berlin 1957, p. 604-605; *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 6, Leipzig 1877, p. 235-241; complete list of Ernesti's publications: J.G. Meusel, *Lexicon der vom Jahre 1750 bis 1800 verstorbenen Deutschen Schriftsteller*, vol. 3, Leipzig 1804, p. 156-166.

<sup>2</sup> G. Erler (ed.), *Die jüngere Matrikel der Universität Leipzig 1559-1809*, vol. 3, Leipzig 1909, p. 256: 1763-1770; *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 20, Leipzig 1884, p. 606, full of errors. The Russians are better informed: metrop. Evgeny, *Slovar russkikh svetskikh pisatelei, sootchestvennikov i chuzhestrantsev, pisavshikh v Rossii*, vol. 2, Moscow 1845, p. 43-49; A.I. Menshchikov, art. "Mattei", in *Biografichesky Slovar professorov i prepodovatelei Imperatorskago Moskovskago Universiteta*, vol. 2, Moscow 1855, p. 24-41 (with a full list of Matthaei's publications).

law and medicine, some more philosophy and theology, but above all ancient philology. He thus became a pupil of the great Ernesti.

He himself became the great Matthaei. This greatness is the result of his stay in Moscow. On Ernesti's recommendation he was initially appointed there as headmaster of the two Moscow gymnasia which supplied the students for and were also institutionally affiliated with the University of Moscow (founded in 1755 but slow to develop). Unfortunately, we do not know by whom Ernesti was approached, but in view of the social set-up we can venture to suppose that he was approached by the Russian ambassador in Dresden by order of Prince Grigory Aleksandrovich Potemkin and Catherine the Great. As we have already seen, antiquity was not entirely unknown territory for Catherine. On the assumption of his new office Matthaei explained to his Russian audience in a speech in Latin how a text was to be interpreted and how important and difficult this was: *De interpretandi facultate eiusque praestantia et difficultate*. The teacher Matthaei as a pupil of Ernesti...

However, it is not as a teacher that Matthaei achieved greatness, even if in 1776, four years after his arrival, he became associate professor and in 1778 full professor in the University of Moscow. More importantly, he already became involved in 1773 in a task with which Catherine the Great had charged an enlightened alumnus of the Academy of Kiev, Bishop Samuel, known to the world as Simeon Mislavsky (in 1783 he became the Metropolite of Kiev), the task of making an extensive description of the Greek manuscripts in two Moscow libraries, the Library of the Holy Synod (*Biblioteka Svyateishago Sinoda*, formerly the Library of the Patriarch, the *Patriarshaya Biblioteka*), and the Library of Typography (*Biblioteka Sinodalnoi Tipografii*). The joint collection of manuscripts comprised a large number of ancient authors,<sup>3</sup> and was entirely unknown in the West, as it was in Russia for that matter. Perhaps it was precisely with a view to this collection that Potemkin prompted Catherine to issue her ukase and at the same time wished to enlist the services of a philologist like Matthaei. In

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. I.M. Snegirev, *Patriarshaya biblioteka, Pamyatniki Moskovskoi Drevnosti*, Moscow 1842-1845, p. 177-192; Brockhaus-Efron, *Entsiklopedichesky Slovar*, vol. 3<sup>a</sup>, St Petersburg 1891, s.v. "Biblioteka", p. 801-803; O. von Gebhardt, *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 14 (1897), p. 298-301.

any case the discovery of the Moscow manuscript collection was a discovery the like of which had not occurred since the days of Italian Humanism. As a true philologist Matthaei dug himself into this goldmine.

It is interesting to see that in this respect, too, Catherine was probably trying to outdo her illustrious predecessor Peter the Great. For in 1722 Peter had received a guest of exceeding importance to him: the future husband of his daughter Anna Petrovna, the twenty-two-year-old Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, Karl Friedrich, who was accompanied by his uncle and mentor Christian August, Bishop of Lübeck. Incidentally, this marriage would produce Czar Peter III (whose real name was Karl Peter Ulrich von Holstein-Gottorp), Catherine's husband deposed in 1762. The distinguished guests expressed the wish to pay a visit to the Library of the Patriarch of Moscow, presumably on the initiative of the Bishop of Lübeck.

Peter the Great charged the Holy Synod to arrange the Library in proper order and to provide appropriate information. This was a source of some embarrassment to the new council, since the *Ober-Prokuror* hardly knew that the library existed. He passed the order on to the assessor of the Holy Synod, Abbot Afanassy Kondondy from Moscow. He was at a loss what to do as well, but at least had the sense to ask the Greek master of the Moscow School of Typography to make a catalogue of the Greek manuscripts. The Old Russian manuscripts, he could apparently assume, would be of no interest to the Germans. This master (or professor, as he styled himself) was Athanassy Skiada, a Greek from Cephalonia.<sup>4</sup>

We do not know when Skiada came to Russia; he relates only that he first served with the cavalry regiments and subsequently became professor of Greek. Skiada made three catalogues in March 1722: one of 50 dated manuscripts and a second of 304 manuscripts from the collection in the Library of the Holy Synod, undated but supplied with a provisional date by Skiada himself, and a third catalogue of 93 manuscripts from the Library of Typography. Together they were printed in Russian and in Latin in November 1723 and dedicated to Peter the Great. The most remarkable "find" was a manuscript with the complete text of the four gospels from 588.

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<sup>4</sup> Evgeny, vol. 2, p. 166-168.

This catalogue was printed in an edition of no more than fifty copies,<sup>5</sup> with the left-hand column in Latin, the right-hand column in Russian. It was not distributed, for that was not part of the commission. One of these fifty copies came through diplomatic channels into the possession of Johann Erhard Kapp (1693-1756), theologian, *professor eloquentiae* in the University of Leipzig, and a man who took a special interest in foreign trade.<sup>6</sup> He published a second edition, in Latin only, under the title *Arcana Bibliothecae Synodalis et Typographiae Mosquensis Sacra*, Leipzig 1724. This catalogue too failed to attract attention. Indeed, given the quite intensive contacts between the Netherlands and Russia and especially between Amsterdam and Moscow, Dutch philologists may perhaps be said to have missed an opportunity here. Even when fifty years later, in 1776, Johann Benedikt Scherer (1714-1824), who in the early 1760's had spent some time in the Russian civil service, wrote an article about the Moscow manuscript collection, he failed to arouse any interest.<sup>7</sup>

Virtually the only Western European to show familiarity with Skiada's catalogue is the theologian and polyhistor Johann Peter Kohl (1698-1778) from Kiel.<sup>8</sup> He had drawn attention to himself in 1723 with a book called *Ecclesia graeca lutheranizans*, which was published just before the time in which the prelates of the Russian Orthodox Church, led by Feofan Prokopovich (we already saw that Prokopovich was regularly suspected of Protestant sympathies), also showed interest in the kind of questions of comparative dogmatics and church history with which Kohl occupied himself. In his book Kohl first established that there were no substantial differences between the Greek and the Russian Church,

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. P. Pekarsky, *Nauka i literatura v Rossii pri Petre Velikom*, vol. 2, St Petersburg 1862, No. 548, p. 599-601. Reprint of the Russian text of the catalogue in *Otechestvennyia Zapiski* 16 (1841), otd. 7, p. 65-77.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Brockhaus-Efron, vol. 14, St Petersburg 1895, p. 394.

<sup>7</sup> J.B. Scherer, *Nordische Nebenstunden*, vol. 1, Frankfurt a.M. 1776, No. 13, p. 107-134. Shortly before Scherer had published a German translation of Nestor's Chronicle: *Des heiligen Nestors und der Fortsetzer desselben älteste Jahrbücher der Russischen Geschichte vom Jahre 858-1203*, Leipzig 1774. He is also the author of *Gräuel der Verwüstung oder Blicke in die französische Revolution*, Frankfurt a.M. 1794, dedicated to "allen biedern Teutschen zum Unterricht, allen angesteckten Teutschen zum Schrecken".

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 16, Leipzig 1882, p. 425; P. Pekarsky, *Istoriya Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1870, p. 77-81; Meusel, vol. 7, Leipzig 1808, p. 234-240.

and then, marshalling all his erudition, discussed point by point the similarities and differences between Lutheranism and the doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church. This explains why he became one of the first members of the brand new Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg in 1725. His subjects were *eloquentia* and church history.

Kohl made himself rather useful. He demonstrated, for instance, that the Bible was not translated into Russian by Hieronymus but by Cyrillus and Methodius, of whom he wrote lives as well. He did this in the first volume of his two-volume introduction to the history, in particular church history, of the Slavs, published in 1729 in Altona.<sup>9</sup> This work is by far the most important result of his life as a scholar. The second volume contains a Latin transcription with a Latin translation of the Church Slavonic version of two sermons on the commune by the prolific and influential fourth-century Church Father Ephrem the Syrian. These sermons were not among the Greek and Latin translations of his work known in Europe up till then and for Kohl they constituted an additional testimony for Lutheranism. He can only have obtained the relevant manuscript via Skiada's catalogue, and in his foreword he in fact speaks highly of Skiada, acknowledging that his personal contacts with Skiada and the latter's profound knowledge of Greek letters were much to his profit.

Be that as it may, there was definitely something odd about Johann Peter Kohl. His stay in St Petersburg lasted only two years, although he had a contract for five years with the possibility of an extension. He was dismissed as early as 1727 and hastily sent back to Germany. However, the emperor did grant him a lifelong pension, from his twenty-ninth year, which enabled him to live as an independent researcher, safe from the tribulations of a university job, for the following fifty years. He manfully weathered this period, first for forty years in Hamburg, where from 1732 to 1759 he was well-known as the publisher of a periodical which was officially entitled *Hamburgische Berichte von neuen gelehrten Sachen*, but which everybody called the *Kohlblätter*. The final ten years of his life were spent in Altona.

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<sup>9</sup> *Introductio in Historiam et Rem Litterariam Slavorum, imprimis Sacram, sive Historia critica versionum slavonicarum maxime insignium, nimirum Codicis sacri et Ephremi Syri, duobus libris absoluta. Accedunt duo sermones Ephremi Syri nondum editi, de sacra coena, fidei Lutheranae testes ac vindices*, Altona 1729.

Despite his precipitate departure from St Petersburg, he is made much of in the Russian biographical accounts, but this is not all that significant, since the Russian authors of Russian biographical accounts are seldom disposed to criticize. But why in fact was he forced to leave so hastily? Three reasons are mentioned. First, he could not stand the climate. Second, after some time he lapsed into a kind of profound reverie, which alarmed the people around him and made them think that he had gone mad. Neither option would seem to explain satisfactorily why he was awarded such a generous pension, until it is learned that Kohl's contract contained a stipulation entailing that part of his salary (his salary was 650 roubles a year, his pension 200 roubles a year) would continue to be paid if illness forced him to return to Germany.

There is also a third possibility, and this is moreover the only one for which we have an authority, namely August Ludwig Schlözer, a man not otherwise known for idle talk. Schlözer relates somewhat cryptically the story that the Kohl of the profound reverie had lost his wits at the sight of Princess (from 1741 Empress) Elizabeth Petrovna, the daughter of Peter the Great born in 1709 (and therefore the sister-in-law of Kohl's countryman Duke Karl Friedrich). The author of the article "Kohl" in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* infers from this that Kohl probably had some kind of amorous relationship with her. Anyone who sees the likeness of Elizabeth Petrovna will have to admit that if there is any truth in Schlözer's account, Johann Peter Kohl was in any case a sound judge of female beauty. Schlözer was of the same opinion.<sup>10</sup>

Whether he was also a sound judge of old manuscripts is doubtful. For once Matthaei had dug himself into his Moscow goldmine, he was soon forced to conclude that the Greek cavalryman Professor Skiada so highly praised by Kohl had not carried out his work with the necessary professional competence. This was hardly surprising, since Skiada had not studied in Leipzig (as

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<sup>10</sup> A.L. Schlözer, *Oeffentliches und Privatleben von ihm selbst beschrieben*, Göttingen 1802, p. 36: "Die nun (i.e. 1761) entschlafne Elisabet war, nach dem Urtheil aller Sachkundigen, die sie als Prinzessin gekannt hatten, eine der vollkommensten Schönheiten ihres Zeitalters. Ein deutscher professor Kohl verlor über ihren Anblick den Verstand, und musste nach Hamburg deportirt werden (wo er aber wieder zu sich kam)". The same story also in his *Russische Anekdoten*, vol. 2, 1766, p. 143.



Kohl had for a year, though not under Ernesti),<sup>11</sup> and had been obliged to work at the speed characteristic of Peter the Great's feverish era, and this was why he had done rather odd things, not only with his datings, but even with the names of the authors and the titles of their writings. By contrast, Matthaei was a man with a broad knowledge of Greek palaeography. In his time he enjoyed the reputation of being almost unique in Europe for his skill in reading Greek manuscripts, irrespective of period, kind of Greek, and hand. Matthaei knew how a collection of manuscripts was to be properly described in a catalogue from the example of the much sought-after catalogue published by Montfaucon in Paris in 1715 of the 42 Greek manuscripts of the Bibliotheca Coisliniana, named after the eminent and sympathetic prelate, Bishop of Metz, Henri-Charles de Cambout, Duc de Coislin (1664-1732), who presented the library which he had inherited from Chancellor Segurier to St. Germain des Prés.<sup>12</sup>

Prince Potemkin undertook to provide the required money and at his suggestion Catherine issued a ukase to that effect. Yet its realization did not proceed smoothly. The first instalment came out in Moscow in 1776.<sup>13</sup> The following instalments were also made ready for the press, but their publication remained forthcoming. Potemkin failed in his support, being too busy with state affairs and Catherine. Following a suggestion of Prince Yusupov, Matthaei first made an excerpt from the planned extensive edition. This excerpt was published in St Petersburg in 1780.<sup>14</sup> It was not until twenty-five years later, in 1805, that the complete description was published in two volumes in Leipzig, with the aid of 1000 Reichsthaler from the cabinet of the Russian emperor.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Erler, vol. 3, p. 206.

<sup>12</sup> B. de Montfaucon, *Bibliotheca Coisliniana olim Segueriana, sive manuscriptorum omnium graecorum quae in ea continentur accurata descriptio*, Paris 1715.

<sup>13</sup> Chr. Friedr. Matthaei, *Notitia codicum manuscriptorum Graecorum Bibliothecarum Mosquensium Sanctissimae Synodi Ecclesiae Orthodoxae Graeco-Rossicae. Insunt varia inedita*, Moscow 1776.

<sup>14</sup> Id., *Index codicum manuscriptorum Graecorum Bibliothecarum Mosquensium Sanctissimae Synodi Ecclesiae Orthodoxae Graeco-Rossicae*, St Petersburg 1780. The manuscript of this *Index* is in the library of the university of Gottingen.

<sup>15</sup> Id., *Accurata codicum Graecorum manuscriptorum Bibliothecarum Mosquensium Sanctissimae Synodi notitia et recensio*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1805. In 1849 the Holy Synod commissioned a new description of the Greek and Roman manuscripts in Moscow. This time the Russian department got priority: K.I. Nevostruev and A.V. Gorsky, *Opisanie slavyanskikh rukopisei patriarshei, nyne Sinodalnoi Biblioteki*, 5 vols., Moscow 1855-1869. The new description of the Greek

But now, at once, the tables had been turned. For those who liked to see themselves as the bearers and guardians of true culture, barbarian Moscow had suddenly become a source of Enlightenment for scholarship, and this was exactly what Potemkin, Catherine the Great, and Alexander I so dearly wanted. The Amsterdam antiquarian Jacob de Wilde had still been able to impress a Russian czar with his collection of (largely) fake sculptures, now it was Professor David Ruhnkenius from Leiden who was permitted to receive, in grateful amazement, a few crumbs from the well-supplied Moscow table of the son of an obscure trumpeter and an unknown mother. He accepted the offer with great eagerness: Matthaei sent him a copy of the manuscript of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (the only surviving manuscript of this hymn) and the *editio princeps* was soon published in Leiden in 1780.<sup>16</sup> But haste made waste: already in 1782 a second, improved edition was necessary. In Oxford Robert Holmes (1748-1805) embarked in 1788 on the execution of what at the time was a most ambitious plan—completed only in 1827 and financially made possible only through the support of the Anglican Church and a hesitant Clarendon Press—to make a new edition of the Septuagint on the basis of as many codices as possible from various countries and libraries. Matthaei was able to gratify him with a enormous number of *variantes lectiones* from manuscripts of the Old Testament from his Moscow collection. And there was

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manuscripts was not finished until about the end of the 19th century: arkhimandrit Vladimir, *Sistematicheskoe opisanie rukopisei Moskovskoi Sinodalnoi (Patriarshei) biblioteki. Chast pervaya: Rukopisi grecheskiya*, Moscow 1894. Cf. the review by O. von Gebhardt in *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 14 (1897), p. 298-301.

<sup>16</sup> Wilamowitz allows himself the ill-based allegation that Matthaei had stolen the Moscow manuscript of the Hymn to Demeter; cf. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Geschichte der Philologie*, Leipzig 1927<sup>3</sup>, p. 40. There is no note on this point in the English version of the *Geschichte der Philologie*, annotated by H. Lloyd-Jones (*History of Classical Scholarship*, London 1982, p. 89). E. Hulshoff Pol, *Studia Ruhnkeniana*, Leiden 1953, p. 177 also charges Matthaei with theft of manuscripts. She makes an exception, however, for the Hymn to Demeter, which, according to her, was bought by Ruhnken from Matthaei for 25 ducats (and, of course, a Leiden professor would never have bought a stolen manuscript ...). The insinuations go back to Oscar von Gebhardt, "Christian Friedrich Matthaei und seine Sammlung griechischer Handschriften", *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 15 (1898), p. 345-357; 393-420; 441-482, esp. 442-458; 537-566. Unfortunately Gebhardt does not pursue the question why the Russians went to so much trouble to get Matthaei back to Moscow, if he was such a scoundrel.

more to come: Eusebius, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Isidore of Pelusium, etc., etc., all recorded by Holmes in his Annual Accounts, the progress reports on his project (142 volumes, now in the Bodleian).

For Matthaei himself the manuscripts of the New Testament and the Church Fathers were the most important. In editing them he showed himself a true pupil of Ernesti. In the years 1782-1788 he edited a complete edition of the New Testament on the basis of a hundred manuscripts undiscovered so far, with the addition of a large number of Greek scholia which had likewise never been studied before. The book also contained 29 copperplate illustrations, and all in all it was a magnificent work.<sup>17</sup> The added Latin translation was not just the standard translation; it derived from the so-called Demidov manuscript, which differed in many readings (if not essentially) from the usual editions of the Vulgate and thus offered enough material to justify a critical re-examination of Hieronymus' work. Volume I of the second edition of this magnificent work came out in 1803, and this is the edition for which Matthaei received the first of his four diamond rings.<sup>18</sup>

In the meantime Matthaei's severe judgement that, in view of his findings in Moscow, the then most authoritative critical editions of the New Testament were unreliable and inaccurate in many places, had plunged him into a polemic in Germany in which both sides fought tooth and nail. For a proper understanding of the Russian version of the Enlightenment and of Matthaei as one of its heroes it is necessary to discuss this briefly. One needs to bear in mind here that although figures like Potemkin and Catherine, and later Alexander I, regarded themselves as enlightened spirits, they understood nothing at all of philology and textual criticism, or of the specific problems of the textual criticism of the Bible and the Church Fathers, problems which were far from insignificant for the religious life and climate of

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<sup>17</sup> *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine, cum animadversionibus criticis editum ex centum codicibus Graecis nunquam antea a quopiam examinatis. Accedunt scholia Graeca maximam partem inedita. Cum tabulis aeneis xxix*, Riga and Leipzig 1782-1788.

<sup>18</sup> *Novum Testamentum Graecum. Secunda editio critica. In hac editione primo omnino omnium per totum librum notatae sunt lectiones ecclesiasticae ex ritu ecclesiarum orientalium, addita quoque sunt dicta synaxaria Evangeliarum et Praxapostoli*. Tomus i, Wittenbergae et Curiae Wariscorum, 1803. Volumes ii and iii were published in 1804 and 1806.

the time. For them there could be said to be Enlightenment as soon as anybody did so much as look at a manuscript or a collection of manuscripts. How they were looked at was less important than the fact that they were looked at. The Moscow manuscript collection and the textual criticism applied to it were prestige objects for them. Strikingly, Menshchikov still adopts the same attitude in his article on Matthaei from 1855: nowhere does he discuss Matthaei's position in philology at the end of the eighteenth century, particularly with respect to the philological avant-garde of the day. For him it was enough that Matthaei had found a vast number of unknown manuscripts in Moscow and that he had published them, i.e. transcribed them and where possible revised and emended them, to praise him to the skies as an "enlightened spirit".

Measured by the standards of Western Europe, and with regard to philology particularly those of Germany, Matthaei was far from an enlightened spirit. Indeed, he belonged to the rearguard with his view, reminiscent of Ernesti, that the Bible contained God's sacrosanct word and that doctrine by definition cannot have a history, apart from the history of the later and therefore non-authentic presentation, extension, distortion, or falsification of it.

Now on this very point a new direction of thought had emerged in German theology and philology, and it was this direction which Matthaei believed it was necessary to oppose. I am referring to the school of Bengel, Semler, and Griesbach. Johann Albrecht Bengel (1667-1752) was the first to make an edition of the original text of the New Testament on the basis of methodological principles which even today have not entirely lost their validity. His *Novum Testamentum Graecum* was published in Tübingen in 1734. Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791) carried on along the same lines. He was the first to argue that dogma too is historically determined. He can thus be regarded as the father of liberal "Dogmengeschichte" and as the originator of the historical-critical exegesis of German theology in the Enlightenment. However, the term Enlightenment here does mean something completely different from the Russian term! Traditional theologians and philologists—including Matthaei, faithful pupil of Ernesti—regarded the Bible and doctrine as unchangeable and divinely authorized. Semler claimed that the stories and the word of the Bible were to be explained from the original circumstances

of place and time. In other words: only historical interpretation can lead to the required correct and authentic understanding of the text.

Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745-1812) was a year younger than Matthaei, but lived to the same age. He was a pupil of Semler in Halle, a very successful teacher in Jena (where some 300 to 400 students regularly attended his lectures), and very good friends with Schiller, who lived in his house in Jena from 1795 to 1799. His first edition of the New Testament came out in 1774-1775. The second edition of 1796 (vol. I) and 1806 (vol. II) was even more important. Griesbach actually took the step which both of his predecessors had considered but only cautiously attempted. He dared to break into and attack the so-called *textus receptus* (simply put, the text as it had been established by Erasmus). This was a decisive step forwards, and it was to this step that Matthaei objected. He set himself up as the defender of the *textus receptus*, with the hundred Moscow manuscripts as his weapon. But not a thousand Moscow manuscripts could have changed the hard fact—harder than diamonds—that Griesbach, with his theoretical rules of textual criticism and his application of these to his edition of the New Testament, became the truly modernizing and truly Enlightening spirit.

Besides the Bible and the Church Fathers, Matthaei also occupied himself with non-Christian Greek authors, mainly by publishing *variantes lectiones* from the Moscow manuscripts. These variants related to, among others, Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Thucydides, Theocritus, Aratus, Strabo, and Pausanias. Moscow could deliver everything off the shelf. By far the most remarkable delivery was the publication of the 340-line fragment of which Matthaei believed that it derived from Sophocles' *Clytemnestra* and for which he received his second diamond ring.<sup>19</sup> I will return to this when we arrive in St Petersburg.

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<sup>19</sup> *Clytemnestrae Sophoclis fragmentum Graece et Latine ex codice Augustano et apographo Alexandrino additis animadversionibus et interpretatione latina primum edidit Matthaei*, Moscow 1805. Matthaei got his third ring for his *Rufi Ephesii, clarissimi medici Graeci, opuscula et fragmenta cum animadversionibus. Multa haec nunc auctiora edita sunt ex codice Mosquensi et Augustano. Accesserunt quaedam ex Galeno et Dioclis Carystii epistola*, Moscow 1806. Fourth ring: *Unius et viginti medicorum Graecorum opuscula et fragmenta cum animadversionibus et vocabulorum indice Graece et Latine. Nunc primo Graece edita ex codice Mosquensi. Cum tabula*, Moscow 1808.

At the request of the curator of the University of Moscow Mikhail Nikitich Muraviev—he will have to be discussed in more detail later—Matthaei also provided a number of editions of Latin authors for educational purposes.<sup>20</sup> For the same reason he wrote two school books: an anthology of Greek literature in 1773 (expanded to two volumes in 1805) and a "Latin syntax for use by Russian youth" in 1780.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, Matthaei, as a *decus academiae*, was expected to act as the official speaker on solemn occasions: on 22 April 1777, the forty-eighth anniversary of Catherine the Great, he held a speech on false modesty with reference to Plutarch's *De vitioso pudore*,<sup>22</sup> and in 1782, on Catherine's name-day, he made the official speech at the opening of the new building of the University of Moscow.<sup>23</sup> What else could he do in this speech but glorify the wisdom and enlightened spirit of the returned Virgin (all the more so since at this time the publication of his manuscript catalogue was stagnating because the imperial horn of plenty was not overflowing for him)?

He died in 1811, just in time to be spared Napoleon's entry into Moscow; 1811, the year in which the historico-political journal *Syn Otechestva* ("Son of the Fatherland") began to come out in St Petersburg. Its motto on the title page (for the first eight years, subsequently omitted) was a line from one of the most famous satires of world literature on the despotic behaviour of an emperor (Juvenal, *Satire* IV 91):

verba animi proferre et vitam impendere vero  
"speak freely the thoughts of your heart and stake your life upon  
the truth".

<sup>20</sup> *Publii Terentii Comoediae sex*, Moscow 1806; *Eutropii Breviarium Romanae historiae*, Moscow 1807; *Conciones et Orationes ex Historicis Latinis publico mandato ex praestantissimis editionibus in usum iuventutis Rossicae editae*, Moscow 1807.

<sup>21</sup> *Chrestomathia Graeca, seu Delectus ex aliquot scriptoribus Graecis. In usum Gymnasiorum Universitatis Mosquensis collegit et animadversionibus illustravit Ch.F. Matthaei. Accedit specimen Lexici inediti ex codicibus manuscriptis*, Moscow 1773. Russian translation: *Grecheskaya Khrestomatiya*. Enlarged second edition: *Lectiones Graecae, seu Excerpta ex variis scriptoribus Graecis in usum iuventutis Graecae et Latinae, cum animadversionibus*, Moscow 1806; *Sintaksis Latinsky dlya upotrebleniya Rossiiskago yunoshestva*, Moscow 1780.

<sup>22</sup> *In Plutarchi peri dusopias commentatio, in festo natali Catharinae Magnae omnium Rossiarum Imperatricis Augustissimae in solemnii conventu Universitatis Caesareae Mosquensis die xxii Aprilis 1777 recitata.*

<sup>23</sup> *Oratio de onomastico Augustissimae Imperatricis Catharinae Magnae in conventu Universitatis Mosquensis, cum novum aedificium dedicaretur, habita*, 1782.

Matthaei had done his utmost, even if he was not a son of the great Russian Fatherland; the days when an unrefined emperor confined himself to Aesop's Fables had been eclipsed by the Enlightenment of a sophisticated empress.

This was how it seemed. But was it true? One swallow does not make a summer. Matthaei was just such a swallow, a bird of passage. In 1784 he had resigned for health and family reasons and perhaps also from disappointment about the eight-year-long stagnation in the financing of his magnum opus. He was given an appropriate testimonial, together with the title of corresponding member of the University of Moscow. But titles alone do not make the pot boil. In October 1785 Matthaei started a new life as the Rector of the Landesschule in Meissen.

In the meantime Potemkin too had become aware that "Altp philologie" in Russia had completely disappeared with Matthaei's departure. Moreover, he was full of the ambition to make Ekaterinoslavl, Catherine's new city in the south, *her* St Petersburg, into an unparalleled and internationally celebrated centre of culture and science. There would have to be a university, and Matthaei would have to be the first professor of ancient philology. Potemkin offered highly attractive terms. Matthaei, though still unemployed at the time, refused. His argument that the climate did not suit him was not very plausible in view of Ekaterinoslavl's geographical position. What his real motive was we do not know. In any case Matthaei did not go. From July 1789 Matthaei was once again an ordinary professor, this time in Wittenberg. Twice he became Dean and once Vice-Dean of the Philosophical Faculty and in 1792 he was the Rector of his new university. Wittenberg seemed to be his finishing point.

But it was not. On 6 July 1803 he was again offered a chair in Moscow. This time the request came from the newly appointed and, as we shall see, highly active Curator of the University of Moscow, Mikhail Nikitich Muraviev. This time Matthaei did not refuse, although on his return in 1804 he was 60 years old and the climate of Moscow had not changed. Why did Matthaei go this time?

Muraviev did everything to ensure that Matthaei was not left out in the cold in Moscow. Less than a month after the invitation to return, on August 1, Matthaei received his first diamond ring, presented to him by the Russian Ambassador in Dresden. We do

not know on which day in 1804 Matthaei returned to Moscow (probably in the summer), but we do know that on 25 May of that year he received the gift which finally enabled him to publish his complete description of the Moscow manuscript collection. The second and third rings were both presented to him by Muraviev in 1805 and 1806. The fourth ring from 1808 was presented to him by A.K. Razumovsky, who shortly before had succeeded Muraviev after his death as the *popechitel* (Curator) of Moscow University and became Minister of Education in 1810.

But although Matthaei was back in Russia, Matthaei would not live for ever. And although there was an "Altphilologie" in Russia, there was no Russian "Altphilologie" in Russia. Against this background it is understandable that Muraviev urged Matthaei to make editions and books for educational purposes as well. Speaking of education: did Matthaei actually have any pupils, Russian pupils?

It is a somewhat painful question. Of course, Matthaei had students who attended his lectures, but that is something different. One of these students deserves to be described here in more detail, not only *in memoriam* and because his name simply should not be omitted in a discussion of the arduous birth of "Altphilologie" in Russia, but also because, historically speaking, he is such a typical representative of a kind of classicist and scholar which one frequently encounters in the rest of the nineteenth century and which was repeatedly portrayed in the work of the great Russian writers from Goncharov through to Chekhov and Ivan Bunin. His name is Roman Fyodorovich Timkovsky.<sup>24</sup>

Roman Fyodorovich Timkovsky is a poignant figure. There is something disarming about him, but also something unpleasant. He was at once aloof and popular. His only joy in life was to immerse himself in his beloved, inimitable classics. He was born in 1785 in a village in the district of Poltava, the Ukraine, as the son of a minor *chinovnik* (civil servant), who after his death left only his good reputation. Roman Fyodorovich was adopted and taught by his uncle, who spent his days in piety and solitude in a

<sup>24</sup> Biographical sketch by Pavel Leontiev in the *Biografichesky Slovar profes-sorov* etc. (cf. note 2), vol. 2, Moscow 1855, p. 486-498; the article on Timkovsky in the *Russky Biografichesky Slovar*, vol. 17, St Petersburg 1912, p. 526-529 adds nothing new and confuses Roman Timkovsky with Ivan Fyodorovich Timkovsky.



monastery cell and helped his nephew there to take his first steps on the road towards science and wisdom. Perhaps this is the stage in his life when he learned the attitude of harshness towards himself which later struck his students so forcibly, and his kind-heartedness towards others, concealed behind immense coldness. Of course he went to what in his case was the obvious breeding ground for devout talent, the Academy of Kiev. There he made such an impression that he was sent to the gymnasium of the University in Moscow in 1797. From 1800 onwards he was a student there at the university.

In 1806 in Moscow he took his doctoral degree with a hastily compiled edition of the Aesop's Fables of Phaedrus after the text of Petrus Burmannus (Leiden 1727), with philological comments in Latin, a significant number of which, as he frankly admits in the preface, were copied from Burmannus' commentary. This did not prevent Timkovsky, then aged twenty-one, from presenting his edition as "the first product of Russian philology". It was not a milestone, in his own view. He also notes in the same preface that he had great difficulties in finding the correct terminology and the correct formulations for scientific prose in his mother tongue, and it was here that he saw the chief merit of his book.<sup>25</sup> It was not the first time that he struggled with Russian: in 1803, at the age of eighteen, he published a Russian prose translation of Ossian from German.<sup>26</sup> He also knew English, French, and Polish.

The subject of his doctoral thesis had been suggested to him by Muraviev, who greatly encouraged him otherwise as well. Although one may wonder whether Peter the Great, with his partiality for the ancient fables, would have derived much pleasure from Timkovsky's commentary (or that of his contemporary, Burmannus, supposing Peter had been able to read it), yet it was a fine gesture on Muraviev's part to surprise the young and promising scholar, as a reward for his labours, with a golden snuffbox from the storeroom of imperial favours.

It seems that Timkovsky was not always too pleased with Muraviev's guiding activities. He never finished the Russian translation of Thucydides which Muraviev had entrusted to him.

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<sup>25</sup> *Phaedri Augusti liberti fabularum Aesopiarum libri quinque ex recensione P. Burmanni. Fedrovy basni s Russkimi zamechaniyami izdal Roman Timkovsky, I.M.U. svobodnykh nauk Magistr, Moscow 1806.*

<sup>26</sup> *Stikhotvoreniya Ossiana, Barda iii veka, s Nemetskago, Moscow 1803.*

And he himself had always been very dissatisfied with the way Muraviev had hurried him into making a Phaedrus edition. As a result, in his view, the edition did not stand the test of scientific criticism. Nonetheless, fifty years later, Leontiev found to his regret that this edition was still the best edition of a classical author produced in Russia.<sup>27</sup> That says enough about the slow development of Russian "Altpphilologie" into a real science.

Why did Muraviev urge Timkovsky to make such haste? It is clear that Timkovsky was Russia's *spes patriae* with regard to "Altpphilologie". But if expectations were to be fulfilled, the young talent would have to go to Germany as soon as possible. Once he had returned from there to his own country, enthused and enriched, he would be able to translate the charisma expected of a professor into scholarly productions and the education of a new generation of students.

Muraviev saw to it that Timkovsky was sent to Germany. He stayed there for three years, and thus became the first in a long line of young Russian classicists who, after completing their studies at the age of about twenty-three, were sent to Western Europe for a period of three years to broaden their horizon and to undergo further training in the centres of science most relevant to their area of interest—universities, museums, archaeological sites, archives. The students were sent out on trust: a well-defined research program was unnecessary for what was known as a "tour of duty abroad" (*zagranichnaya komandirovka*). Later in the nineteenth century it became customary for the stipendiary to write a report, which was not usually an ordinary travel report, but consisted of the published result of the research carried out abroad. These were often very extensive and substantial articles. They mostly appeared in the journal of the Ministry of Education, the *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya*. From the very first it was customary that individuals who had been awarded a tour of duty abroad were sooner or later (usually sooner) appointed as professors. This policy was one of the main factors contributing to the high standard of Russian "Altertumswissenschaft" in the period 1890-1917.

For Timkovsky the three years in Germany were doubtless the best and happiest years of his life. That is not how it seemed at

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<sup>27</sup> *Biografichesky Slovar professorov* etc., p. 495.

first. He could hardly have been more unfortunate when, on arriving in Halle in 1806, he was confronted by Napoleon's troops, which captured the city in bloody street fights. The university went up in flames as well. Homeless and afflicted by the misery of war and hunger, Timkovsky fled on foot to Leipzig. On 23 October 1806 he was enrolled in the matricula there.<sup>28</sup> He spent part of his time in Leipzig making an improved and supplemented version of the dissertation on dithyrambs for which he had received the title *magister* earlier that year in Moscow.<sup>29</sup> This treatise, published in Leipzig, is cited by Nitzsch in his edition of Plato's *Ion* from 1822, and is thus the first work by a Russian philologist to be referred to by a non-Russian philologist.<sup>30</sup>

After a year Timkovsky left for Gottingen. Even more than Leipzig, this became the place which he would remember for the rest of his life with great warmth and nostalgia. Up till 1812 Gottingen was a very popular destination for many Russians. And Gottingen was cosmopolitan: 456 of the 701 students enrolled in 1801 came from abroad, unlike Halle, where about ten percent of more than 700 students were foreigners. For all the Russian students in Gottingen—twenty in Timkovsky's time, including the son of the Rector of the University of Moscow Ivan Petrovich Turgenev, the later Decembrist Nikolai Ivanovich Turgenev—the time they spent in Gottingen was the best time of their lives. In retrospect it was fortunate that Timkovsky had had to take refuge from the much less hospitable and much less civilized Halle.<sup>31</sup>

Gottingen was the cradle of the famous German "Altertums-wissenschaft" of the nineteenth century. With regard to the study of antiquity between 1763 and 1812 it was the university of Christian Gottlob Heyne (born in 1729). Compared with the illustrious standard-bearers of German neo-Humanism, Heyne is described in the standard monographs on the German culture of his period as a more modest foot-soldier. In the surveys of the history of the study of antiquity he is, at most, mentioned as the predecessor of

<sup>28</sup> Erler, vol. 3, p. 422.

<sup>29</sup> *De dithyrambis eorumque usu apud Graecos et Romanos*, Moscow 1806.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. G.G. Nitzsch, *Platonis dialogus Ion*, Leipzig, 1822, p. 33.

<sup>31</sup> Götz von Selle (ed.), *Die Matrikel der Georg-August-Universität zu Göttingen 1734-1837*, Hildesheim-Leipzig 1937, p. 473; M. Wischnitzer, *Die Universität Göttingen und die Entwicklung der liberalen Ideen in Russland im ersten Viertel des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1907, p. 24-25, 34, 42, 46-47, 200-204.

the great men who followed him, the greatest of these being Friedrich August Wolf. This fails to do justice to Heyne's position as a key figure. After all, no less a person than Thomas Carlyle wrote a biographical sketch of him as early as 1828.<sup>32</sup>

Heyne was the son of a poor linen-weaver from Chemnitz. In one way or another he managed to study philology and law in Leipzig. The Seven Years' War impeded him in his intellectual development, but owing to his edition of Tibullus from 1755 he was put forward by the Leiden philologist David Ruhnken as the new *professor rhetoricae et poeticae* of Gottingen. His inaugural lecture (23 July 1763) was, as such lectures should be, unmistakably programmatic: *De veris bonarum artium litterarumque incrementis ex libertate publica*, "Culture can only truly thrive in a climate of political freedom".<sup>33</sup> For almost half a century Heyne set his stamp on university life in and outside Gottingen and on German schools to such an extent that Wilamowitz called him a true *praeceptor Germaniae*, and Frank Turner has remarked that although the historico-philological school of Gottingen, i.e. Heyne, is less well-known than the work of Winckelmann, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, and others, it was perhaps more important in the long run.<sup>34</sup>

In 1765 the young Goethe wanted to go to Gottingen to study *rhetorica et poetica* under Heyne. But his father refused permission and made him read law in Leipzig. That, at least, was something useful. It was a classic father-and-son conflict, and according to Humphry Trevelyan "one of the major events of Goethe's life".

Trevelyan even formulates an answer to the "if-question" of what would have happened if Goethe *had* been allowed to study under Heyne: "he could have obtained as thorough a knowledge of Greek literature, art and history as could then be had in Germany. This would have made him more proof against the ideas of his great contemporaries, Winckelmann, Lessing and Herder. He would have had a store of sure knowledge by which

<sup>32</sup> Th. Carlyle, *The Life of Heyne, Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. 2, London 1869, p. 75-114.

<sup>33</sup> In Chr. G. Heyne, *Opuscula academica collecta et animadversionibus locupletata*, vol. 1, Göttingen 1785, p. 39-75.

<sup>34</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *History of Classical Scholarship*, transl. Alan Harris, London 1982, p. 102; id., *Geschichte der Philologie*, Leipzig 1927<sup>3</sup>, p. 46; F.M. Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain*, New Haven 1981, p. 3; cf. also p. 83.

to test their theories. They would have been to him men of flesh and blood, whose ideas and ways were the outcome of the time and place in which they lived and had no absolute value for other times and places. They would have been to him less the eternal ideal of humanity, and therefore less of an inspiration to his poetry and thought. Familiarity would have bred not indeed contempt, but a cool detachment. Had he known the Greeks better, they might have lost half their power over him".<sup>35</sup>

Heyne was a great pioneer, and this quotation indicates the direction in which he worked. He was the first to think Greek mythology worthy of separate scientific attention.<sup>36</sup> Sandys calls him "the founder of that branch of classical learning that deals with the study of *Realien*, the science of "things" as contrasted with that of "words", archaeology (in its widest sense) as contrasted with language and literature".<sup>37</sup> And finally, according to Carlyle, Heyne was "the first who with any decisiveness attempted to translate fairly beyond the letter of the Classics; to read in the writings of the Ancients, not their language alone, or even their detached opinions and records, but their spirit and character, their way of life and thought; ... how, in one word, the Greeks and Romans were men, even as we are".<sup>38</sup>

Heyne's method was often openly presentist: ancient history was given fresh topicality through his skill in putting phenomena from his own time in a historical perspective by comparing them with similar phenomena from antiquity. Because he also applied this method to ancient poetry, this poetry became much more alive for him. "Indem er so die Vorliebe für die Antike in weitem Umkreis erweckte und förderte, schuf er die Voraussetzung dafür, dass aus einer Fachdisziplin eine geistige Bewegung entspringen konnte: der Neuhumanismus W. von Humboldts und F.A. Wolfs".<sup>39</sup> It is the greatest compliment which a student of humanities could wish.

<sup>35</sup> Humphry Trevelyan, *Goethe and the Greeks*, Cambridge 1981, p. 27-29.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. W. Burkert, "Griechische Mythologie und die Geistesgeschichte der Moderne", in: W. den Boer a.o., "Les études classiques aux xix<sup>e</sup> et xx<sup>e</sup> siècles: leur place dans l'histoire des idées," *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* xxvi, Vandoeuvres-Genève 1980, p. 159-199, esp. p. 162 and 164.

<sup>37</sup> J.E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, vol. 3, Cambridge 1908, p. 40.

<sup>38</sup> Carlyle, p. 111.

<sup>39</sup> Ulrich Schindel in the *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 9, Berlin 1972, p. 94.

I will list a few practical examples of the way in which Heyne propagated his historical knowledge of antiquity among a broader public.

In a lecture from July 1783 he dealt with the causes and the events of the Roman Social War against the background of the American War of Independence.<sup>40</sup> Two months later, in the foundation day speech of 18 September 1783, he discussed the phenomenon of the Federal Leagues in the Hellenistic era against the background of the newly formed Federal Union of the United States of America. His conclusion in this speech was that (ancient) history taught that such a union could not lead to the formation of a truly united state.<sup>41</sup> On 2 July 1789 a speech on the question of where the Greeks and the Romans obtained their slaves, starting with an extensive reference to the then current debate on modern slavery.<sup>42</sup> In September 1789 a speech on the theme that the fruits of the hard-won freedom of the nations are rarely in harmony with the high hopes entertained beforehand.<sup>43</sup> The link with the events in Paris and France since Quatorze Juillet of that year is obvious. In July 1791 a speech in which the use of Australia as a penal colony is compared to the Roman practice of the *deportatio in insulam*.<sup>44</sup> In September 1792 a speech on the vain attempts of the Roman Senate in the imperial age to restore the ancient freedom of the Republic.<sup>45</sup> In March 1793 a speech on land distribution laws in Rome.<sup>46</sup>

This last example merits a few comments, and not just by way

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<sup>40</sup> Heyne, "De belli Romanorum socialis caussis et eventu, respectu ad bellum cum Coloniis Americanis gestum habito", *Opuscula academica*, vol. iii, Göttingen 1788, p. 144-161.

<sup>41</sup> Heyne, "Foederatarum rerumpublicarum coalitio vix unquam satis fida exemplis ex antiquitate illustratur (Nata ex tempore, coeuntibus in rempublicam foederatam provinciis Americanis, commentatio)", *Opuscula academica*, vol. iii, p. 162-183.

<sup>42</sup> Heyne, "E quibus terris mancipia in Graecorum et Romanorum fora advecta fuerint", *Opuscula academica*, vol. iv, Göttingen 1796, p. 120-139; cf. M.I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, London 1980, p. 154 n. 42.

<sup>43</sup> Heyne, "Libertas populorum raro cum expectato ab iis fructu recuperata", *Opuscula academica*, vol. iv, p. 140-158.

<sup>44</sup> Heyne, "Comparatur deportatio in novam Cambriam australem cum deportatione Romanorum in insulam", *Opuscula academica*, vol. iv, p. 268-285.

<sup>45</sup> Heyne, "Vani Senatus Romani conatus sub imperatoribus restituendae libertatem reipublicae", *Opuscula academica*, vol. iv, p. 331-349.

<sup>46</sup> Heyne, "Leges agrariae pestiferae et execrabiles", *Opuscula academica*, vol. iv, p. 350-373.

of a digression. For this speech on "the disastrous and cursed land distribution laws" can make it clear how already in Heyne the limits of progressiveness are determined by his commitment and allegiance to the bourgeois-liberal views of his time and how already in Heyne this commitment and allegiance set an ideological stamp—in the Mannheimian sense—on the study of ancient history. Heyne's case is not an isolated one; it is the case of many historians.

Heyne starts his speech from 1793 by remarking that there are fanatics in France (the wording of my paraphrase corresponds to Heyne's)—individuals who have nothing to lose, for whom everything is equally miserable, and who have nothing to pin their hopes on either—who think it right to pounce on other people's possessions by calling out loudly for distribution of land and equality of property. They believe that only then can there be true freedom and true equality. They appeal to ancient Rome and praise the land distribution laws of the Roman Republic as examples worthy of imitation. In short: from Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus to Gracchus Babeuf.

Now, Heyne goes on to say, these individuals know nothing about ancient Rome and so it is the task of the historian to unmask their pernicious ignorance by setting forth the real nature of these ancient land distribution laws. These laws, he adds (and this is explained in further detail later on in the argument), were the product of criminal elements who not only broke down whatever freedom there was, but even destroyed the whole society. At the conclusion of his prologue Heyne calls on his audience to make sure that the people do not form a false opinion on such matters through "our" negligence (*ne culpa nostra iudicia de rebus prava in vulgus emanent*).<sup>47</sup>

History as ideology; points on the coordinate of reaction. But we can also note points on the coordinate of action. For Heyne makes it quite clear that he thinks little of the universally praised freedom of the Romans: "If it appears anywhere how far people are attached to and guided by established myths, it is here". Roman freedom existed only for the powerful and the rich; it was the freedom of these powerful and rich people to fleece their less fortunate fellow citizens with arbitrary rule and unwarranted

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<sup>47</sup> Heyne, "Leges agrariae", p. 352.

arrogance. The indictment against the Roman ruling class is spun out at great length by Heyne, as is the misery of the have-nots in Rome. Thus far the utopian element, the element of action, in Heyne's argument, the argument of the successful son of an insignificant linen-weaver from godforsaken Chemnitz.

But how about the rulers of Berlin, London, or St Petersburg in 1793? And what good did Heyne's Ciceronian periods do for the have-nots of 1793? Heyne says in so many words that he finds it unnecessary and even dangerous to conclude from his speech that something also ought to be done in his own time to improve the distribution of property. Mannheim is right: "the utopias of ascendant classes are often, to a large extent, permeated with ideological elements".<sup>48</sup>

The class difference, so to speak, of ancient Rome, which he himself did so much to highlight, is outdated according to Heyne. After all, he argues, the common man in "our" time enjoys incomparably more legal protection and freedom than the common man in Rome. No right-minded person in our age, Heyne expostulates, would want to exchange his position for a life in Roman times, unless this exchange would put him in the ranks of the senators or the leaders of the factions or of those who otherwise shamelessly enrich themselves. For Heyne the moral is clear: we should not sell ourselves heart and soul to revolutionary agitators and we should bear in mind how good our life is. It is the moral of a sedate centrist.

*Praeceptor Germaniae*. "teacher of Germany": among the pupils of Heyne invariably mentioned besides Wilhelm von Humboldt and Friedrich August Wolf are the Schlegel brothers (August Wilhelm more than Friedrich), the translator of Homer Johann Heinrich Voss, and the Danish archaeologist (and friend of Thorwaldsen) Johann Georg Zoëga. There are also secondary figures like August Matthiae and Heyne's son-in-law and biographer, the historian Arnold Ludwig Hermann Heeren.<sup>49</sup> One of Heyne's pupils was wrested from oblivion in 1980 by Sir Moses Finley: Johann Friedrich Reitemeier, author of a *Geschichte und Zustand der Sklaverey und Leibeigenschaft in Griechenland*, published in Berlin in

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<sup>48</sup> See above, Chapter Two note 12.

<sup>49</sup> Author of, a.o., *Ideen über die Politik, den Verkehr und den Handel der vornehmsten Völker der Alten Welt*, Göttingen 1826.



the same year, 1789, in which Heyne pronounced his lecture on the provenance of the slaves in Graeco-Roman antiquity and greeted with approval by Heyne (and with even more approval by Finley).<sup>50</sup>

With regard to a large number of other fields, including the study of ancient Russian history and its philology, Gottingen between 1769 and 1809 was the university of August Ludwig Schlözer. After considerable activities as a historian, publicist, etc., Schlözer, on retiring in the fullness of years, took up material on the so-called Chronicle of Nestor which he had collected during his stay in St Petersburg (1761-1767) and revised it into the *magnum opus* of his five-volume edition of this chronicle.<sup>51</sup> *Memor fui antiquorum dierum* was the motto of the coat of arms presented to him 1802, when he was raised to the peerage by Alexander I after the publication of the first two volumes. It was for the first time in Germany that the principles (no matter how unstable in retrospect) of textual criticism obtaining to the publication of ancient texts were applied to a medieval text. The work was reviewed in detail by Heyne in the *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, it may well be that this work by Schlözer led Timkovsky to exchange Leipzig for Gottingen, although I have found no explicit information on this in the sources. In any case it is quite certain that Timkovsky became acquainted with Schlözer's Nestor edition in Gottingen, in view of his own remarkable investigations in the same field after his return to Russia.

In 1807 the truly great years had long since gone by for Heyne. Friedrich August Wolf had surpassed him, and Wolf had made him feel this, to the great indignation of Timkovsky, for whom Heyne always remained the undisputed ideal of a harmonious combination of scientific method and humanity. On the rare occasions when he succeeded in dropping his attitude of cool detachment towards his Moscow students, Gottingen and above all Heyne were a favourite subject of professorial digressions. He would praise Heyne for the cordial way in which he associated

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. E. Landsberg on Reitemeier in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 28, Leipzig 1889, p. 154-159, and Finley, p. 25, 35-39, 42.

<sup>51</sup> *Nestor, Russische Annalen in ihrer slavonischen Grundsprache, verglichen, übersetzt, und erklärt* von A.L. Schlözer, Göttingen, vol. i 1802, ii 1802; iii 1805; iv 1805; v 1809.

<sup>52</sup> *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* 1803, 78. Stück, p. 769-779.

with his students, especially his foreign students. He was treated to the same cordiality by one of Heyne's many pupils, Christoph Wilhelm Mitscherlich, who even accommodated him in his house.<sup>53</sup> Of course, Timkovsky also studied under Heeren's direction.<sup>54</sup>

Outside the hours designated for study and science, Timkovsky managed to earn enough extra money with jobs to buy books. He conscientiously went to all the auctions and in fact succeeded in amassing a splendid private collection and transporting it to Moscow. His bibliomania could perhaps be called a form of *imitatio domini*. For the end of the eighteenth century is the period in which various prominent members of the wealthy upper classes in Russia started to acquire rich libraries through large-scale and systematic purchases in Western Europe. It really began with Peter the Great, helped by his librarian J.D. Schumacher, one of the founders, as I already mentioned, of the Academy of Sciences. They were directly followed by Feofan Prokopovich and V.N. Tatishchev. Half a century later Catherine laid the foundation of the library of the Hermitage with her book collection. She was followed by the great men from *her* environment, figures like Prince Shcherbatov, Musin-Pushkin, the Razumovskys, and the Demidovs.

This last, immensely rich family is highly interesting. It first built its fortune in capital, landed property, and *coloni* during the Nordic War and further expanded it through services rendered to the emperor. As a result, the family was able to give ample proof of its *liberalitas* through *beneficia*, as indeed it did (historians of the socio-economic history of the Roman Imperial Age can learn a great deal here).<sup>55</sup> In connection with the bibliomania of the obscure student Roman Timkovsky one descendant deserves special attention: Pavl Grigorievich Demidov (1738-1821). He is the man who gave his name to the aforementioned Demidov manuscript of the *Vulgata*, which Matthaei made public in his *Novum Testamentum Graecum et Latinum*. Pavl Grigorievich also studied in

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<sup>53</sup> Mitscherlich (1760-1854; *professor ordinarius* since 1794) was Heyne's best pupil in matters concerning Horace.

<sup>54</sup> Cf., on Heeren, Finley, p. 12, 14, 162 n. 127.

<sup>55</sup> See *s.v.* "Demidovy" in Brockhaus-Efron, vol. 10, St Petersburg 1893, p. 363-365.

Gottingen. In 1803 he gave his entire library and in 1806 his collection of thousands of coins and medals to the University of Moscow. In the academic year 1803/1804 a series of public lectures on this collection were delivered.<sup>56</sup> Timkovsky, then student at the same university, cannot have failed to take note of these. Incidentally, the primogenitor of the Demidov family, a certain Demid Antufiev, was still a simple smith in the Dutch-Frisian arms factory of Tula in the year that Peter the Great was born. That was in 1672, known in Dutch history as the "year of calamity".

In 1812, Moscow's year of calamity, another Demidov, Nikolai Nikitich (1773-1828), in his younger years aide-de-camp (in ancient Rome a *tribunus militum*) of Prince Potemkin, came to the rescue of his country, threatened by Napoleon, with his famous *Demidovsky polk*, an entire legion which he himself financed (nothing could be more Roman: the parallel with Octavianus' action after the upheaval in Rome which followed the assassination of Julius Caesar is obvious and it is not the only one). But during the great fire of Moscow the main part of the splendid private libraries of the great were lost. Likewise nothing was left of the collection scraped together by the insignificant Roman Fyodorovich Timkovsky, when after the event he returned to Moscow from the Ukrainian countryside. But most painful for him was the fact that the letters of Heyne, who died in the same year 1812 and who had faithfully continued to write to him after his departure from Gottingen, had also been lost.

One can imagine that somebody who first in 1806 and then in 1812 had been confronted by the less agreeable aspects of the Napoleon phenomenon might derive a certain satisfaction from being elected to deliver a speech of thanks for Alexander's victory and Napoleon's defeat during a solemn assembly of his university. Timkovsky delivered this speech of thanks on 25 April 1814. Its title, abridged and translated, was "Triumph of the Moscow Muses".<sup>57</sup> The speech offers no clues to the biographer. Timkov-

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. S. Shevyrev, *Istoriya Imperatorskago Moskovskago Universiteta 1755-1855*, Moscow 1855, p. 333.

<sup>57</sup> *Torzhestvo Moskovskikh Muz, prazdnovaushikh gromkiya pobedy i dostoslavnoe pokorenje gordoi stolitsy Frantsii*, in: *Rechi, proizneshennyya v torzhestvennykh sobraniyakh Imperatorskago Moskovskago Universiteta Russkimi professorami onago*, vol. iii, Moscow 1821, p. 205-216.

sky was too familiar with the rules of ancient rhetoric for that. Of course, he compares the brief sojourn of the French in Moscow with the equally brief sojourn of the Gauls in Rome, complete with the geese of the Capitol and with Camillus. Livy and Polybius are his sources. But it would strongly seem that he did not recover from the effects of the calamitous year 1812. Indeed, what could he do without books?

Inwardly he became highly irritable, and at the same time in his dealings with students he showed an iron self-control which often terrified them. That, at least, is how it is described by his pupil Aleksei Mikhailovich Kubarev<sup>58</sup> (and it is this description which on a number of points anticipates the written portraits of classical scholars in nineteenth-century Russian literature).

"His lecturing strongly resembled dictation. Anyone who wished to do so could always write down his words literally. If he had to repeat anything, he always did so in exactly the same words. This shows how thoroughly he prepared his lectures [Kubarev thinks...]. He dealt at length with every detail of the text and almost never allowed himself to go beyond the limits which he had set himself. He liked to reveal to us beautiful passages from the classics, but never proceeded to analyse this beauty any further. He left it to the student to feel and experience it. His character and his manner of dress were like his lectures: very ordinary and modest. His face was always formal and impassive. Often we failed to pay attention and consequently we often made capital blunders, but on these occasions I never noticed anything like a derisive smile or anger or indignation in his face".<sup>59</sup>

In the preface to his edition of Terence from 1806, Matthaei, the *starets* of classical Moscow, fails for words to praise Timkovsky and repeats Socrates' words on his young friend Isocrates at the end of Plato's *Phaedrus*. In paraphrase: he is still young, but better than anyone else, and has, moreover, an innate presence; I would not be surprised if he were to leave all others far behind him as he

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<sup>58</sup> Kubarev (1796-1881), the son of a *suyashchennik* (priest), later became professor of Latin literature at Moscow University. After Timkovsky's death the chair for Greek and Latin was split up. I have only seen Kubarev's commentary on Nepos (*Novyya kritich. primechaniya k zhizneopisaniyam K. Nepota*, Moscow 1873), which suggests that he was a rather inconspicuous scholar, to say the least.

<sup>59</sup> Quotation derived from Leontiev (see note 24).

advances in years, and if that is not enough for him, a divine inspiration will prompt him to even greater deeds, for in his spiritual disposition there is something which naturally yearns for wisdom.<sup>60</sup>

In his rare moments of openness Timkovsky could be thrilled by the awareness that love of classical literature was capable of bringing about feelings of mutual respect and sympathy and even brotherhood between persons from all walks of life. In his final years he conspicuously lost interest in science and life. He had always suffered badly from illnesses, but now his mind was affected as well as his body. From time to time he himself realized this too, and for him it was a reason to withdraw more and more into solitude and into himself. Only rarely did his students succeed in making him forget his cool melancholy, and then his inborn sensitivity would briefly prevail over his inborn sombre composure. He died early in 1820 at the age of thirty-five. The coffin with his mortal remains was carried by a few of his students and buried in the obscure Lazarev Cemetery. The students also collected money for a marble memorial stone on his tomb, with an inscription: *In memoriam beneficiorum viri incomparabilis...*

Now let us return to the year 1803. In this year Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin predicted in his last edition of the monthly journal *Vestnik Evropy* ("Messenger of Europe"), the journal which he founded in 1802 and which was famously continued by others until 1917, that "soon new professors called forth from Germany and well-known in all of Europe through their talents will increase the number of learned spirits in the University of Moscow and the first Russian university, under the leadership of its energetic and tireless curator, will climb up yet another step into the radiant light of science".<sup>61</sup>

This curator, as we know, was Muraviev. His successful attempt to make Matthaei travel to Moscow for the second time was part of a much broader campaign to give "his" Moscow University national and possibly even international standing through a rather extensive "purchase"—in the twentieth century the word "brain-

<sup>60</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus* 279a.

<sup>61</sup> M.M. Karamzin, *Vestnik Evropy* 1803, quoted by Shevyrev, p. 335.

drain" would be invented for this—of scientific and didactic talent in Western Europe.

Karamzin's prediction proved correct. In early spring 1803 there arose some commotion among the Gottingen professors. A report in the university gazette stated that Privy Councillor Muraviev had written a letter expressing the desire to offer a number of German scholars the honour and the emoluments (an annual salary of 2000 roubles for a full and 1500 roubles for an associate professor) of a chair.<sup>62</sup> It was one of Muraviev's first acts in his new function of Curator of the Moscow University.<sup>63</sup>

Not everyone had a stomach for the adventure. In the course of 1804 a total of nine came, Matthaei being the only one from Wittenberg. There was a philosopher from Cologne, a zoologist from Mainz, an astronomer from Leipzig. The other five were all from Gottingen: a mathematician, a chemist, a statistician, a botanist, and a classicist who also regarded himself as a philologist and philosopher and naturally came from the school of Christian Gottlob Heyne.

That so many from Gottingen accepted Muraviev's invitation is linked up with the fact that Russia and the University of Moscow were much more familiar at the Georgia-Augusta University than at other German universities. I have already mentioned the man who together with and perhaps even more than Heyne dominated Gottingen in this period and who had himself spent six years in St Petersburg and was now occupied with his Nestor edition; August Ludwig Schlözer. I have not yet mentioned his eldest son: Christian Schlözer, a pupil of, among others, Heyne. In 1795 in his twenty-first year he was awarded a prize for an exposition on the right to vote in a society based on equality,<sup>64</sup> and a year later he more or less trusted to his luck and fled eastwards, in utter despair about his poor and totally unequal relationship with his father. In 1800 he was asked to fill the chair of natural law in Dorpat—"probably on account of my name rather than my personal merit", he himself remarked<sup>65</sup>—and in 1801 he became

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<sup>62</sup> Russian version in *Severny Vestnik* 2, St Petersburg 1804, No. 6, p. 374-377.

<sup>63</sup> For the history of the university of Moscow during these four years see Shevrev, p. 321-384, esp. 333-339.

<sup>64</sup> *De iure suffragii in societate aequali*.

<sup>65</sup> In the preface of his *Nachalnyia osnovaniya Gosudarstvennago Khozyaistva*,

a full professor of natural law and politics in the University of Moscow.<sup>66</sup> He stayed there until 1826. Once he had proved that he too could be great and a man of importance, his father came round entirely and their personal relationship became very close. Moreover, the old August Ludwig had just been raised to the peerage by the czar, so that he was allowed to call himself *von Schlözer* in Gottingen. Needless to say, Muraviev made good use of both circumstances and they worked greatly to his advantage.<sup>67</sup>

But who was the classicist from Gottingen who went to Moscow? He is an almost forgotten figure, certainly with regard to his ten-year stay in Moscow. If he is known at all, it is as the editor of a critical edition with a Latin translation of the collected works of Aristotle in the series of the Societas Bipontina: Johann Gottlieb Buhle (1763-1821), together with Heeren and Groddeck and two others a regular member of Heyne's Seminar in the years 1783-1785.<sup>68</sup> In 1785 he had won the gold medal in the philosophical faculty with his *Calendarium Palestinae oeconomicum*, a work in which data derived from accounts of travellers to Palestine regarding the climatological and geographical circumstances and the agrarian products of the Holy Land, arranged per month, were presented as a preliminary study for a non-theological commentary on the Bible.

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1821. This is the Russian edition, published at the instance of Muraviev, of his *Anfangsgründe der Staatswirtschaft oder der Lehre von dem Nationalreichthume*, 2 vols., Riga 1805-1807. It was the first book on this subject in Russia. There is also a French edition.

<sup>66</sup> *Biografichesky Slovar professorov* etc., vol. 2, Moscow 1855, p. 627-630; cf. *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* vol. 31, Leipzig 1890, p. 600-603.

<sup>67</sup> On Russian students in Gottingen and the connections between the universities of Gottingen and Moscow see Wischnitzer; particularly important were father and son Schlözer and Ivan Petrovich Turgenev: see Wischnitzer, p. 13, 34, 50-53, 55-56, 202-204; V.M. Istryin, "Russkie studenty v Gettingen v 1802-1804 gg.", *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya*, n.s. 28 (1910), No. 7, otd. 2, p. 80-144. Ivan Petrovich Turgenev (1752-1807): banished by Catherine the Great in 1792 because of his progressive views; 1796-1804 Director of Moscow University and a strong supporter of Muraviev's policy to turn Moscow into a "second Gottingen"; two of his sons studied in Gottingen: Aleksandr, 1802-1804, and the later Decembrist Nikolai Ivanovich.

<sup>68</sup> *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 3, Leipzig 1876, p. 509-510 (Bursian); Brockhaus-Efron, vol. 4<sup>a</sup>, St Petersburg 1891, p. 900; N.S. Tikhonravov in *Biografichesky Slovar professorov* etc., vol. 1, Moscow 1855, p. 112-128, reprinted in N.S. Tikhonravov, *Sochineniya*, vol. 3 ch. 1, Moscow 1898, p. 29-43. On Buhle in Göttingen see Istryin, esp. p. 116-119.

Before he went to study in Gottingen, Buhle had already drawn attention to himself in his native town Braunschweig with what, certainly judging by the title, was a remarkable "Abhandlung über die Heiterkeit der Seele, und die Mittel sie zu erhalten und zu befördern" in the *Braunschweigische Gelehrte Beiträge* from 1782. I do not know to what extent he was served by his biographical sketch of the life of Anne Boleyn from 1785 in the same *Beiträge*, but the fact is that from July 1786 he taught Greek and Latin for five years to three English princes from the House of Hannover who were then studying in Gottingen, the Dukes of Cumberland, Sussex, and Cambridge. (The first of these three is Ernst August, who later became notorious for his extremely reactionary political views: "the most unpopular prince of modern times".) Shortly before, in April 1786, he had defended his doctoral dissertation *De distributione librorum Aristotelis in exotericos et acroamaticos eiusque rationibus et causis*. It was the first in a long line of specialist studies on Aristotle, concluded in 1804 with the publication of the fifth and final volume of his Bipontina edition of Aristotle's works.<sup>69</sup> The preliminary studies included inquiries into the authenticity of the *Metaphysics*, the arrangement and order of Aristotle's works, the origin and background of the Arabian tradition, the sources of Albertus Magnus' *De animalibus*, pantheism from Xenophanes to Spinoza, the "invention" of logic in Greek philosophy prior to Aristotle, etc.<sup>70</sup> In the meantime, at Heyne's request, he also made an edition of Aratus of Soli.<sup>71</sup>

But was all this wise from a social point of view? Wasn't this too esoterical, weren't classical studies in danger of losing contact with the times? Buhle considered this a legitimate question, and when he was appointed Professor of Philosophy in the University of Gottingen, he devoted his inaugural lecture to a discussion of the value of the study of ancient philosophy for a better understanding of modern philosophy. This was followed by a long series of philosophical handbooks and surveys, the most

<sup>69</sup> *Aristotelis Opera Omnia graece recensuit, annotationem criticam et novam versionem latinam adiecit I.G. Buhle*, 5 vols., Zweibrücken 1791-1804.

<sup>70</sup> Published 1788-1790 in the *Bibliothek der allen Litteratur und Kunst* (Gottingen) and the *Societatis Regiae Scientiarum Gottingensis Commentationes*, phil.-hist. Klasse, vols. 10, 11 and 12.

<sup>71</sup> *Arati Solensis Phaenomena et Diosemea graece et latine*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1793-1801.



important being his *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie und einer kritischen Litteratur derselben*, 8 volumes (Göttingen 1796), and his *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie seit der Epoche der Wiederherstellung der Wissenschaften*, 6 volumes (Göttingen 1800-1804).<sup>72</sup> Another indication of his wide interests is the fact that he was quite prepared to lecture on the history of English poetry and to publish a book *Über den Ursprung und die Schicksale des Ordens der Rosenkreuzer und Freimaurer* (1804).

"The study of the classics is deteriorating as a result of the public's unmotivated preference for modern literature and the supremacy of light reading. This preference for light reading is also noticeable in the schools. The so-called pedagogues, with their plans and memorandums, have contributed to the erosion of academic education and to the decline of ancient literature in the schools." Thus in 1787 wrote Friedrich August Wiedeburg (1751-1815), professor and pedagogue and, like Buhle, from Braunschweig.<sup>73</sup> He tried to halt the decline by founding a periodical, the *Humanistisches Magazin* (the quotation is from pages 13-14 of the first issue), which aimed to create more interest in and sympathy for ancient literature by relating it more closely to modern literature. Strict science had to be popularized. Not surprisingly, Buhle, as a pupil of Heyne and as an ardent defender of the humanities, started at once to write for this magazine, as he did for the non-specialist *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde*. Buhle was well-intentioned, but still too difficult, for instance in his exposition in dialogue form "Über den Zustand der Seele nach dem Tode" in number 6 of the latter magazine.

Now first something more about Muraviev. Mikhail Nikitich Muraviev (1757-1807; an uncle of the poet K.N. Batyushkov), nicknamed *drug yunoshestva*, "friend of the young", was a most sympathetic and lively man of some talent and much influence.

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<sup>72</sup> His *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie* was published in Italian in 1823 (by Lancetti). Some other titles: *Grundzüge einer allgemeinen Encyklopädie der Wissenschaften*, Göttingen 1790; *Geschichte des philosophirenden menschlichen Verstandes*, Lemgo 1791; *Einleitung in die allgemeine Logik und die Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Göttingen 1795; *Entwurf einer Transcendentalphilosophie*, Göttingen 1798; *Sextus Empiricus oder der Scepticismus der Griechen*, Lemgo 1799; *Lehrbuch des Naturrechts*, 1799; *Ideen zur Rechtswissenschaft, Moral und Politik*, 1799.

<sup>73</sup> His son Justus Theodor Wiedeburg (born in 1782) stayed from 1805 until 1817 in Russia, mainly in St Petersburg, where he taught Latin. No further traces are left.

As a little boy he had learnt German from a stray German adventurer in Orenburg, where his father was vice-governor in the sixties. He attended the gymnasium of Moscow University, acquired a preference for antiquity, in particular ancient philosophy and Virgil, but learnt at the same time that antiquity is not the only source of intellectual enlightenment. In St Petersburg at the Academy of Sciences he attended lectures on the mathematics of Euler and the physics of Kraft, learned Greek, English, and Italian as well as German, French, and Latin, discovered the Scottish Enlightenment, and was discovered by Catherine the Great, who in 1785 engaged him as the teacher of philosophy, Russian literature, and history of the later Czar Alexander I and his brother Constantine. He remained one of Alexander's closest advisers, from 1802 as Vice-Minister of Education, from 1803 moreover as Curator of the University of Moscow. This combination of functions meant that Muraviev was more often in St Petersburg than in Moscow, but despite this and despite the short period of no more than four years he did so much for "his" university that he has rightly been called its second founder.<sup>74</sup> He was also the founder of a large number of institutes (e.g. in the medical faculty) and societies (e.g. the Society for History and Russian Antiquities—*Obshchestva istorii i drevnostei Rossiiskikh*), he broke ground for the laying out of a botanical garden and the building of a Museum of Natural History, he organized series of public lectures open to all who were interested (including the series of lectures on Demidov's coin collection; Christian Schlözer, incidentally, was one of the main attractions among these public lecturers), and he significantly expanded the academic staff.

Buhle sold himself dearly. It was only in November 1804 that he rose to Muraviev's bait. This most certainly had to do with the financial aspects of the transfer. Buhle demanded—and got—the rank and the salary (2000 roubles a year) of a full professor, plus

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<sup>74</sup> So N.F. Koshansky in his obituary article in *Vestnik Evropy* 1807, No. 19. More on Muraviev: Brockhaus-Efron, vol. 20, St Petersburg 1897, p. 189-190; on his nickname see L.N. Maikov in *Sochineniya K.N. Batyushkova*, izd. P.N. Batyushkovym, vol. 2, St Petersburg 1885, p. 419-420; for a more detailed biographical sketch see E. Petukhov, "Mikhail Nikitich Muraviev. Ocherk ego zhizni i deyatelnosti", *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya* 294 (1894), No. 8, otdel nauk, p. 265-296. Works: *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 3 vols., St Petersburg 1819-1820. Some titles: *Ekloga* (an imitation of Vergil, 1771); *O Virgilie*, *Uchenie Istorii*; *O Istorii i Istorikakh*; *Istoriki drevnosti*; *Avugustov vek*, etc.

free accommodation and a travelling allowance of 2000 roubles. He needed this final sum, as he wrote to Muraviev on 23 April 1804, in order to buy early editions of Aristotle and other material, which would enable him to proceed with his work on his Aristotle edition without being dependent on a well-stocked university library. He felt obliged to do this for his publisher and this work was furthermore the basis on which his reputation as a scholar rested.

The money came, but not the rest of the Aristotle edition, and Buhle no longer enjoys any reputation as a scholar. Yet it would be wrong or at least unfair to conclude from the much smaller amount of publications by Buhle in his Russian years that his stay in Russia failed to yield anything. To start with, we can observe a high level of teaching activity, lectures at the university and the Pedagogical Institute and *lectiones privatissimae* in his own house (in Latin and French), of which the list of subjects alone is impressive—from metaphysics and natural law to the satires and epistles of Horace, from Kant, Fichte, and Schelling to what is called "mythology and archaeology in the narrow sense", more specifically explained as the "history of the art of painting and sculpture and architecture among the Egyptians, Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans". In any case his lectures on Russian art resulted in a few more publications for Buhle.

We do not know how many students attended these lectures, but we do know that the playwright Aleksandr Sergeevich Griboedov of later fame, who studied at the University of Moscow from 1810 to 1812 (he was born in 1795), was once among the audience, as was, of course, Roman Timkovsky. The only problem was that Buhle had no Russian, which did little to boost the enthusiasm of the students, despite the professor's diligent attempts to enliven his teaching by lecturing on contemporary German philosophers too. Apart from that, however, anyone who studies this history cannot but become fascinated by the almost touching way in which the Muraviev-Buhle duo, with unmistakable like-mindedness and from totally different backgrounds, harmoniously sought ways to give shape to what they meant by progress through enlightenment. For although Muraviev was more often to be found in St Petersburg than in Moscow, yet on the bank of the Neva he never lost sight of the University of Moscow, not lastly because he had a dedicated deputy and coadjutor there in the person of Buhle. The

relationship between the two men is characterized by a mixture of submission and self-importance on the part of the arrived scholar vis-à-vis the influential favourite of the emperor himself, but equally by a mixture of readiness to listen and aloofness on the part of the established man of consequence Muraviev, who liked to present himself as a man of consequence not only by birth and descent vis-à-vis the professor whom he obviously regarded as eminently capable. Neither of the two had a truly great mind, but in this they are all the more representative of their generation. Muraviev saw Buhle as the man whom he could use and who also allowed himself to be used in order to realize his own ideas and plans. It is not known to what extent Buhle's decision to go to Moscow was prompted by his desire to function as a kind of cultural-scientific missionary there, but the fact is that he applied himself with great zeal to Muraviev's idea of serving the Russian public with information and enlightenment by founding and distributing a scientific and a more generally cultural periodical.

These two periodicals are the *Moskovskiya Uchenyya Vedomosti* ("Moscow Scientific Reports") and the *Zhurnal Izyashchnykh Iskusstv* ("Journal of Fine Arts"). Of the latter journal only three issues came out. In the first of these Buhle wrote, among other things, a large article on Russian engravers of the eighteenth century, Aleksei Rostovtsev and his contemporaries. But the *Zhurnal* attracted so little interest that some of its articles could later be published elsewhere without anybody noticing that they had been published before. The *Vedomosti*, obviously conceived after the example of the *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, carried on from 7 January 1805 to 20 July 1807. They came out weekly in eight-page issues—often on stylish pale blue paper—which, for want of cooperation from other professors, were largely filled by Buhle himself. The *Vedomosti* contained all kinds of communications about the University of Moscow itself, but was in the first place a periodical for reviews. A relatively large number of reviews were devoted to books recently published in Göttingen, and of course Matthaei's supposed discovery of Sophocles' *Clytemnestra* was trumpeted forth,<sup>75</sup> but also Fichte's Erlanger lectures *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten und seine Erscheinung im Gebiete der Freiheit* were brought to the attention of the rather inattentive Russian readers.

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<sup>75</sup> *Mosk. Uchen. Vedom.*, No. 6, 10 February 1806, p. 41-48.

Thus the period 1805-1807 formed a high point in Buhle's life. In 1806 he was asked to grace the *dies natalis* of the University of Moscow with a speech. Buhle seized this opportunity to explain his views on how the reconstruction of the history of Southern Russia in antiquity should be carried out.<sup>76</sup> No one had given this subject any thought since the days of Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer.

In July 1807 both periodicals came to an abrupt and unforeseen end. They had not been a success: there was no public for them (yet). But this was not the reason for their demise. The end was directly related to the death on 29 July 1807 of the fifty-year-old Muraviev, who from the very first had personally financed the enterprise. Buhle not only gave up his periodicals, but also his position at the university. For the time being he stayed in Moscow as the Director of the Pedagogical Institute, and he also continued to give his private lectures. But after a while these were only for the benefit of Grand Duchess Ekaterina Pavlovna, patroness of Karamzin and also an admirer of Gottingen, whom he visited regularly during her lengthy sojourns in Tver and whose librarian he became in 1811. Indirectly this led to his appointment as an adviser of Emperor Alexander I, at the imperial salary of 7000 roubles per annum. As a true pupil of Heyne he compared Napoleon's stay in Moscow in 1812 (he himself was safely out of range in Yaroslavl) with the occupation of Rome-without-the-Capitol by the Gauls.

In 1814, after a two-year intermezzo in St Petersburg, he travelled in the retinue of his Grand Duchess—on her way to becoming Queen of Württemberg—to Lübeck, where he felt the time had come to resign and return to Braunschweig. There Johann Joachim Eschenburg (1743-1820), like the slightly younger Matthaei a pupil of Ernesti and moreover like Buhle a pupil of Heyne, procured a chair for him at the Collegium Carolinum. Buhle was allowed time to continue work on his edition of Aristotle and to write a book about his experiences in Russia. Nothing came of the latter. When censorship was instituted in the Duchy of Braunschweig he became the first censor, which made him widely unpopular. Thus the life of Johann Gottlieb Buhle

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<sup>76</sup> *De optima ratione, qua Historia populorum, qui ante saeculum nonum terras nunc imperio Russico subjectas, praesertim meridionales, inhabitasse aut pertransisse feruntur, condi posse videatur*, Moscow 1806.

shows the almost classic pattern of action to reaction. He died in 1821, which is also the year of his last publication: *Über den Ursprung und das Leben des Menschengeschlechts und das künftige Loos nach dem Tode*. What was this future fate after death? Oblivion.

Just as Matthaei had found a pupil in Timkovsky, so Buhle found a pupil in Nikolai Fyodorovich Koshansky (1781-1831).<sup>77</sup> The pupils knew each other from the time when they studied at the University of Moscow. Later, together with a few others, they had formed a reading group in Moscow, where Greek and Latin authors were read.<sup>78</sup> Their social backgrounds were rather different: Timkovsky had not had an easy childhood, whereas Koshansky was of noble birth and had been sent to the boarding school for the nobility of Moscow University from 1797 to 1799. He cannot have learned much there, but in any case he picked up some French, German, and Russian and even started on Latin, Greek, and English. Moreover, he became acquainted with Vasily Andreevich Zhukovsky, the man who—apart from Pushkin—was later regarded as the greatest Russian poet of his time and who in old age succeeded in making the first (and possibly best) translation of the *Odyssey* in Russian hexameters without knowing a word of Greek. This last fact is invariably glossed over by the Russian classicists who have written about the blessings of Greek literature and the triumphs of its study in Russia.

In 1799 Koshansky was enrolled in the university. He studied in two faculties, those of law and philosophy, and did so to such general satisfaction that he was allowed to teach before graduating: Greek and Latin at the ordinary university gymnasium, rhetoric at the boarding school for the nobility. He also started to distinguish himself as an "homme de lettres" by publishing

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<sup>77</sup> Literature on Koshansky: I.Ya. Seleznev, "Nikolai Fyodorovich Koshansky", *Pamyatnaya knizhka Imperatorskago Aleksandrovskago Litseya na 1856-1857 god*, St Petersburg 1856, p. 142-160; Ya. Grot, *Pushkin, ego litseiskie tovarishchi i nastavniki*, St Petersburg 1887, p. 27-29 and 55-60; P. Chernyaev, "Vliyanie shkoly, obstanovki i epokhi na razvitie v A.S. Pushkine lyubvi k antichnomu miru", *Gimnaziya* 11 (1898), No. 6, p. 1-9; A. Malein, "Nikolai Fyodorovich Koshansky", *Pamyati Leonida Nikolaevicha Maikova*, St. Petersburg 1902, p. 177-220; N. Piksanov, "N.F. Koshansky", in: A.S. Pushkin, *Sochineniya*, ed. S.A. Vengerov, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1907, p. 250-259.

<sup>78</sup> K.N. Batyushkov, *Sochineniya*, izd. P.N. Batyushkovym, vol. 2, St Petersburg 1885, p. 525.

translations and imitations of French authors such as Blanchard and Madame de Genlis, then regarded as immortal, and of Virgil, and even ventured to write a few poems. This was reason enough for Muraviev to take him under his wing and give him some guidance. Immediately after he graduated—on the same day that Timkovsky took his degree of *magister*—Koshansky was invited by Muraviev to come to St Petersburg, from where he would go abroad for three years, like Timkovsky. And after returning Koshansky, like Timkovsky, would become professor in the University of Moscow.

But Koshansky did not go. The war situation in Western Europe made the intended journey impossible, as the Russian biographers of Koshansky unanimously state. They do not mention why the same situation did *not* prevent Timkovsky from travelling, so that one suspects that Koshansky simply did not dare. Be that as it may, when Timkovsky was forced to flee from the French in Halle in 1806, Koshansky was safely back in Moscow.

He had spent his year in St Petersburg studying the antiquarian collections of the Hermitage and the Academy of Arts. Muraviev had also urged him to write a doctoral thesis and make a Russian translation of a "guide to knowledge of the antiquities" by his French contemporary Aubin Louis Millin de Grandmaison (1759-1818, author of the *Monuments antiques inédits*, 1802-1806, and the *Galérie mythologique*, 1811), who, besides being active as a *vir antiquarius*, had also supported the French Revolution under the name "Eleuthérophile", "friend of freedom", and was valued by Muraviev for this reason as well. The translation was published in Moscow in 1807.

On the title page Koshansky could call himself D.Phil., for he had recently completed and defended his dissertation: a solid piece of work on the myth of Pandora, now probably only to be found in the University Library of Moscow.<sup>79</sup> In it the author argues that the inventor of the myth of Pandora, Prometheus, and Epimetheus wished to offer an allegorical explanation of the origin and birth of evil in the world. Evil was a consequence of civilization. Civilization had aroused new needs in man and at the same time had awakened the sexual desire which made

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<sup>79</sup> *Rukovodstvo k poznaniyu drevnostei.*

people exceed their proper limits and which was expressive of vice in its various seductive forms. Vice came accompanied with diseases and premature old age and all kinds of other troubles for mankind. In this interpretation Prometheus stands for human civilization by means of the arts and Pandora embodies vice, which first attracts man through its seductive appearance and then brings ruin upon him, as allegorically expressed by the opening of Pandora's box. Finally, Epimetheus represents later repentance, which agonizes the unfortunate sinners in proportion to their previous inability to resist the temptations.

This dissertation convinced the *amplissimus ordo philosophorum* of the University of Moscow to such a degree that it gave Koshansky his doctor's title, although little is to be found of the discussion of Pandora in ancient art as promised on the title page.<sup>80</sup> Buhle wrote an enthusiastic review in his *Vedomosti*, number 9 of 2 March 1807. He was obliged to, and indeed he wanted to, since he himself, as I noted before, had no Russian, so that for his enlightening activities on behalf of the Russian public he was entirely dependent on the aid of a translator, and this translator was Koshansky. Thus Koshansky had also translated Buhle's Latin foundation day speech from 1806 on the history of Southern Russia in antiquity into Russian.<sup>81</sup>

Koshansky himself also wrote for Buhle's periodicals. He made translations, for instance of Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*. Everything seemed to be going as planned, but like Buhle Koshansky was unpleasantly surprised by the sudden death of his patron Muraviev. He failed to become a professor, and reluctantly became a teacher at the boarding school for the nobility and a number of other educational institutes in Moscow, where, besides Russian and Church Slavonic and Latin, he also taught rhetoric, logic, history of Russian literature, mythology, and antiquities. He also gave private lessons in the mansions of the rich, particularly in the house of his patron's widow, Ekaterina Fyodorovna Muraviev, who engaged Buhle and Koshansky to teach her son Nikita Mikhailovich (1796-1843) Latin in 1810.

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<sup>80</sup> *Illustratio Mythi de Pandora et antiquae artis operum ad eum spectantium*, Moscow 1806.

<sup>81</sup> *O lushchem sposobe, kak mozžno pisat istoriyu tekhn narodov, koi, po obshchemu mneniyu, prezhde devyatogo veka naselyali, ili perekhodili Rossiiskaya, osobenno yuzhnyya zemli*; cf. note 76.



These lessons neither prevented nor contributed to the fact that Nikita Muraviev—in his gentleness, intellectual curiosity, and highly developed patriotism a true son of his father—later became the leader of the moderate wing of the Decembrists (and so ended his life as an exile in Siberia). Reading some of the enlightened Mikhail Muraviev's essays on antiquity and moreover bearing in mind that his former pupil Emperor Alexander I was regularly fascinated by various forms of "constitutionalism", one is not surprised to learn that his son became the author of a draft for a constitutional monarchy.<sup>82</sup>

Koshansky made a virtue of necessity (no professorship) by writing an *in memoriam* article on Muraviev in *Vestnik Evropy*, then edited by Zhukovsky, and by subsequently throwing himself as a teacher into the publication of school books (with which he had already started in 1805). These were elementary things with titles such as "Rules of the Latin Language", "Basic Rules of Russian Grammar", "Textbook for the Latin and French Languages". His greatest success was his Latin grammar, *Latinskaya grammatika*, which was first published in 1811 and went into its eleventh and final edition in 1844. His example was Christian Gottlob Bröder's *Practische Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache*, but unlike the German model most sample sentences were thought up by Koshansky himself and are relevant to his own times, often in a somewhat peculiar and grammatically imperfect way: it is, of course, useful to know that *plures in Turcia et India mulieres uno [!] viro nubunt* ("most women in Turkey and India marry one man"), but what is the diligent pupil to do with the extremely practical advice not to tarry in newly whitewashed rooms—*diu ne morare [!] in conclavibus modo dealbatis*?

Likewise in 1811 he published an anthology of fragments from Greek epic (Odyssey Book 6), dramatic, and bucolic (Bion and Moschus) poetry.<sup>83</sup> These were intended to make the classics widely known and thus give Russian poetry access to this fountain of inspiration. Two Russian poets are known to have drunk

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<sup>82</sup> Batyushkov, *Sochineniya*, vol. 1, p. 104; Wischnitzer, p. 143-144, 148-149, 164, 195, 215; N.M. Druzhinin, *Dekabrist Nikita Muraviev*, Moscow 1933; A.G. Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution 1825. The Decembrist Movement, its Origins, Development, and Significance*, Stanford 1961, p. 86-97.

<sup>83</sup> *Tsvety grecheskoi poezii*, Moscow 1811: text, translation and commentary; the commentary is mostly derived from Valckenaer and Brunck.

from it via the anthology: Batyushkov and Pushkin, of whom more later. Remarkably, Koshansky not only published parallel texts from antiquity, but also from contemporary West European (French, German, English, Italian, and even Spanish) and Russian poetry (Bogdanovich, Derzhavin, Kapnist). In his acknowledgements he mentions Buhle and Matthaei, whose supposed *Clytemnestra* fragment by Sophocles was also given a place in the anthology, and he expresses the hope that his anthology will not only have many male readers, but also many female readers.

Contrary to what Koshansky himself may have expected, the anthology never ran to a second edition. This probably has to do with its ambivalent nature: because all the texts were provided with a translation, the book was not appropriate for use in schools, while on the other hand the "ordinary" public—and this certainly applies to the hoped-for female readers—had no need for original texts, since they had no knowledge of Greek. Moreover, Koshansky had not thought it necessary to translate the Latin parallel texts which he quotes, while he had provided the Greek texts, as it suited him, with either a Russian or a French or a Latin translation.

Koshansky's plan to translate Winckelmann's entire oeuvre met with objections on the part of the Minister of Education Razumovsky, who was not very fond of him.<sup>84</sup> But it was splendid for him to receive a diamond ring from Emperor Alexander I for his school editions of Phaedrus' Fables and Cornelius Nepos' Lives (from 1814 and 1816 respectively). Both editions were officially compulsory reading in all Russian gymnasia. Soon after Koshansky usefully published a two-volume "Companion to Ancient Classical Literature", altogether almost 1000 pages in octavo, in which the users (pupils and students) could find all manner of information about archaeology, mythology, and Greek and Roman antiquities as well as a survey of classical authors.<sup>85</sup> It was not a very original work, being a Russian translation, supplemented with information about editions and translations of classical authors published in Russia, of a work by Buhle's friend from

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<sup>84</sup> Koshansky is not mentioned by Irene Husar, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann in den ostslawischen Ländern*, Stendal 1979 (*Beiträge der Winckelmann-Gesellschaft*, hrsg. von Max Kunze, vol. 9). The first complete Russian translation appeared in 1888: see Husar, p. 52.

<sup>85</sup> *Ruchnaya kniga drevnei klassicheskoi slovesnosti*, vols. 1-2, 1816-1817.

Braunschweig J.J. Eschenburg (who also has the first complete German translation of Shakespeare to his name). But it was very useful and was explicitly intended by Koshansky to help improve knowledge of antiquity. In this he succeeded—we know that it was used to effect by, for instance, Pushkin.

Koshansky received most attention—and a volley of exasperated criticism on Belinsky's part—for the publication of his *Obshchaya Ritorika*, "General Rhetoric", first edition 1829, tenth and last edition 1849, followed a year after his death in 1831 by *Chastnaya Ritorika*, "Specific Rhetoric", 1832<sup>1</sup>-1849<sup>7</sup>.

He wrote these books after a senior committee, whose task it was to ensure on behalf of the minister that no poor textbooks were used in the schools, had decided that a better organization of the education in language and literature was necessary. Koshansky thought so too. After all, he was a member of this committee. With a few others Koshansky drew up a programme, which would have to be supported by a textbook. This task was entrusted to a gray-haired old gentleman, A. F. Merzlyakov, who thought he could easily dispose of the work by dashing off a German book on the subject. This was not appreciated by the committee members, and so the job was passed on to Koshansky. His book did find favour, based as it was on what the committee regarded as contemporary Russian literary production, and thus it not only appeared in print, but was also reprinted without alterations for the following twenty years. This unchangeable and "official" and thereby implicitly conservative character of the book was precisely the reason for Koshansky's unfortunate notoriety after his death. In 1845 Belinsky angrily expressed his regret that Koshansky with his handbooks had permanently spoiled whole generations of pupils in their ability to commit their thoughts to paper in a lucid manner. He thought Koshansky merely an old-fashioned and narrow-minded pedant, a regressive supporter of Tredyakovsky in Pushkin's time, and he questioned the entire genre of rhetoric, or, as we now might say, stylistics, which he believed had never yet produced one good stylist. "It is like wanting to teach somebody how to behave at a funeral or a wedding."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> V.G. Belinsky, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 7, Moscow 1981, p. 512-522, first published in *Otechestvennye Zapiski* 38 (1845), No. 1, otdel 6, p. 27-35; on Merzlyakov, professor at Moscow University and teacher of Koshansky, see S.P. Shevyrev in the *Biografichesky Slovar professorov* etc., vol. 2, Moscow 1855,

Reading through Koshansky's rhetorical handbooks and knowing their results in the ponderous and hackneyed professorial prose of the Russian nineteenth century, one finds it easy to agree with Belinsky. But it is, of course, somewhat curious to reproach an author fifteen years after his death for not keeping up with the times. For many students it was (and is) perhaps not all that bad to be forced to follow something of an imposed scheme in their writings. From a didactic point of view Koshansky's *Obshchaya Ritorika*, with all its scholastic classifications, is quite well-constructed. The basic rules of each prose genre are dealt with in three parts, each consisting of two subsections. In the first part *inventio*, intended, as Koshansky himself puts it, "to induce the student to develop ideas and connect them with one another"; in the second part *dispositio*; in the third part *elocutio*. All these are illustrated with quotations from the ancient rhetorical literature, formulated in the usual terminology of this literature, and practically-oriented. The six chapters of the *Chastnaya Ritorika*, after an initial chapter with a brief survey of the history of world literature, successively deal with the genres of the letter, the conversation, the "narrative" (from novel to necrology), the oration, and the scientific discourse. A huge number of examples are supplied, derived from the work of Karamzin, Derzhavin, and Krylov, but also Zhukovsky, Batyushkov, and Pushkin. Koshansky's books are not always very stimulating, are often to our mind anachronistic, but are still better than nothing and in any case a remarkable and powerful injection of the ancient rhetorical ideal of education into the practice of rough nineteenth-century Russian life.

In short, Koshansky was no luminary and certainly no genius, but no complete fool either: not averse to a kind of bureaucratic phraseology full of servility, a typical lackey, a conformist of whom an anonymous denunciation from 1826 writes that "he would count it a sin and a crime to discuss something with his pupils that was not allowed". A man of reaction, "who liked to present himself as an affected and formal dandy and an assiduous pursuer of female beauty and preferred to express himself in French—a rather ridiculous French for that matter".<sup>87</sup> That seems

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p. 52-100.

<sup>87</sup> M.A. Korf, quoted by Grot, p. 226.

to say it all. Except for one thing: Koshansky was Pushkin's Latin tutor. For this he had moved to St Petersburg in 1811.

In the history of Russian *klassitsizm* 1811 is an important year, not so much because the Alexander Lyceum in Tsarskoe Selo—Pushkin's school—opened its doors, but above all because the public career of Sergei Semeonovich Uvarov (1786-1855) began in this year. From 1811 to 1821 he was *popechitel*, curator, of the educational district of St Petersburg, from 1826 to 1832 he was the most energetic and most competent member of the senior ministerial committee charged with revising the entire system of education (the *Komitel ustroistva uchebnykh zavedenii*), in 1832 he became Assistant Minister of Education, and from 1833 to 1849 he was Minister of Education. This term of office was never equalled in length and importance by anybody in the same function. Furthermore, he was President of the Academy of Sciences from 1818 until his death in 1855. As a result of all this, he became the man who ensured that Greek and Latin were given a fixed place in the Russian educational system and thus he became the man who gave large numbers of young Russian intellectuals, through the study of "Alttertumswissenschaft" and a position as teacher of classical languages, an established—albeit often notorious—reputation and assured existence.<sup>88</sup>

With respect to the birth of "Altphilologie" in Russia, it is enough to ask here under whose and what influence the so influential Uvarov was confirmed in his high regard for the classics. The question cannot be simply answered by mentioning one or two teachers, for Uvarov was above all a self-taught man, who formed his own opinions in the salons of Western Europe by listening to the subjects currently discussed there. In this respect he differs from the highly educated statesmen from the early years of Alexander I—figures like M.N. Muraviev and A.K. Razumovsky—in that he maintained many more personal contacts with the protagonists of the West European intellectual and cultural elite. Another difference is that in the last years of his life

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<sup>88</sup> C.H. Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education. An Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786-1855*, DeKalb 1984; Georg Schmid, "Goethe und Uwarow und ihr Briefwechsel", *Russische Revue. Vierteljahrschrift für die Kunde Russlands*, herausgegeben von R. Hammerstein, vol. 17, 2, St Petersburg 1888, p. 131-182 (not mentioned by Whittaker).

he succeeded in making the transition from *dilettante* to "recognized" scholar: it is supposed on solid grounds that he wrote his posthumously published study on the administrative organization of the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire in the period from Constantine the Great to Justinian to obtain his doctorate at the University of Dorpat.<sup>89</sup> But measured by his ambitions and achievements Sergei Uvarov might with some justice be called a spiritual heir of Mikhail Muraviev. As, for instance, Muraviev is called the second founder of Lomonosov's University of Moscow, so Uvarov might be called the Lomonosov-and-Muraviev of the University of St Petersburg: he both founded this university in 1819 and brought it to eminence.

In accordance with noble custom a private tutor was engaged for Uvarov around 1800. It almost goes without saying that this was a Frenchman, a certain Abbé Mauguin, who had fled to far-away Russia to escape from the dark side of the French Revolution and accordingly impressed upon his pupil not only the principles of Latin grammar but also the aristocratic values of the *ancien régime* and in particular Voltaire's *thèse royale*, derived from Tacitus and Pliny the Younger, of the enlightened monarch as the protector of freedom. This was entirely in the spirit of Catherine the Great, who as godmother had held little Sergei over the baptismal font in the palace chapel on 25 August 1786. Growing up as a young man, he read the same books as the Decembrists and went far in concurring with their "constitutionalism", but he was probably just too old and too sensible (or, perhaps, too calculating) to allow himself to be carried away by this reading.<sup>90</sup> "In this man", as the historian Sergei Soloviev already wrote in 1907, "the qualities of the heart by no means matched the qualities of his mind".<sup>91</sup> It is surmised that he also studied for some time under Schlözer in Gottingen, but his name does not occur in the matricula. In any case his writings show that he was well aware of what was being proclaimed in Gottingen.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>89</sup> *De provinciarum imperii orientalis administrandarum forma mutata inde a Constantino Magno usque ad Iustinianum*, Dorpat 1858.

<sup>90</sup> Whittaker, p. 36 and 258 n. 13; p. 37, 44-50, 55: "The Turgenev brothers looked upon Uvarov as a possibility for the Decembrist ranks and thought that he might "come over"."

<sup>91</sup> Quoted by N.V. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1959, p. 70.

<sup>92</sup> Whittaker, p. 13-14, 35, 250 n. 10; according to Schmid, p. 132, Uvarov

The excessive admiration for French classicism with which Abbé Mauguin had infected him cooled down considerably during a stay in Vienna from 1807 to 1809, especially through his contacts with Madame de Staël and the Schlegel brothers. He came to the conclusion that the old apolitical salon culture of the *ancien régime* belonged firmly to the past and that the time was ripe for a rejuvenation of Europe, in which the East in particular would have to supply the inspiration for new wisdom and a new Renaissance. This idea was not new to the period. Friedrich Schlegel, for instance, had startled the intellectuals of Europe in 1808 with his essay *Über Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, in which he argues that the language and religion of the Greeks and Romans had their origin in the ancient culture of India. New in Uvarov was that he advocated the founding of an institution which was to develop these vague notions about the influence of the East on the West in a concrete form and to provide them with a scientific basis. Uvarov took it for granted that Russia, which leaned with its back against Asia, regarded the entire north of the Asian continent as part of its sphere of influence, and maintained close relations with Georgia, Turkey, Persia, and China, would have to be the seat of such an institution: an "Académie Asiatique", "médiatrice entre la civilisation de l'Europe et les lumières d'Asie,... où l'on verrait *le critique européen* à côté du *Lama asiatique*".

Uvarov committed his plan to paper in an essay, originally written in French and dedicated to the Minister of Education Razumovsky, entitled *Projet d'une Académie Asiatique*, St Petersburg 1810.<sup>93</sup> The essay made him world-famous overnight. It was the beginning of a correspondence between Goethe and Uvarov which was to continue for twenty years. At last, many people thought, someone had dared to speak up against Rousseau and for the Bible, against the benighted West and for the truly wise and enlightened East, against materialism and for idealism.<sup>94</sup> At the same time Uvarov himself, straight after the publication of his *Projet*, was materialistic enough to ask for and win the hand of Razumovsky's extremely wealthy daughter, and on 31 December

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may have studied for three years in Gottingen: 1803-1806.

<sup>93</sup> German translation Berlin 1811, Russian translation (by Zhukovsky) in *Vestnik Evropy* 2 (1811), p. 96-120. I have used the reprint in *Etudes de philologie et de critique* par M. le Comte Ouvaroff, Paris 1845, p. 3ff.

<sup>94</sup> For more information see Whittaker, p. 19-23 and 252-253.

1810 Uvarov entered the civil service under his father-in-law in the very senior function of *popechitel*, curator, of the educational district of St Petersburg. He was only twenty-four years old.

Now what were Uvarov's ideas at the beginning of his career about the function of the education in and study of classical antiquity and Greek and Latin? His *Projet* says little about this, apart from remarks about the supposed origin from India of Greek and Roman religious and philosophical ideas: Thales of Miletus, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Pythagoras, Plato, Claudius Ptolemaeus, all these owed their wisdom directly or indirectly, via Egypt or the Phoenician cities, to the East. Uvarov cites the testimonies of Diogenes Laertius and Philostratus.<sup>95</sup>

But then why not focus *all* attention on the East, particularly on the Oriental languages? After all, as Uvarov knows, "étudier la langue d'un peuple, c'est étudier en même temps la série de ses idées", "l'étude analytique d'une langue nous initie au génie de la nation".<sup>96</sup> But for Uvarov it is a foregone conclusion that one cannot start on the Oriental languages without preparation: any institute for Oriental studies presupposes education in Greek and Latin, for without knowledge of these two languages every kind of knowledge completely lacks a foundation. And he goes on to quote a comment by Heyne in the *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* from 1768, which evidently made a deep impression on him. It became one the most powerful motives in his later educational policy as a minister and later continued to be influential:<sup>97</sup>

Russia has a great advantage over the rest of Europe. It can take Greek literature as the basis for its own national literature and in this way found an entirely new school [einen in ganz Europa weit feineren Originalgeschmack unter sich einführen]. It need not be guided by German letters or French *esprit* or our ponderous Latin scholarship. The profound study of Greek and its literature will open up an inexhaustible source of new ideas and fertile

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<sup>95</sup> In his *Essai sur les Mystères d'Eleusis* (1812—printed in 100 copies; reprinted in St Petersburg, 1815, in Paris—by Silvestre de Sacy—in 1816, as well as in the *Etudes de philologie et de critique*), Uvarov tries to prove, on linguistic grounds, that the ritual of Eleusis had its origin in India. It is dedicated to the Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, of which Uvarov had become a member in 1811; cf. Schmid, p. 146-147.

<sup>96</sup> "Projet", p. 14.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 26-27. For the original text see the review of Schlözer's *Probe russischer Annalen* in the *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 1768, 27. und 28. Stück, p. 217 (without Heyne's name being mentioned).



images. It will give shape to history, philosophy, and poetry in the purest forms, forms which come closest to the true models. Precisely the Greek language, for that matter, is in itself already closely tied to the religion of the Russians and to Slavonic language and literature, which seems to have been modelled on Greek. Russia's earliest writers particularly studied the historians and the geographers of the ancient Greeks. No doubt there are fine Greek manuscripts, of Strabo for instance, to be found in Russia. And Byzantine history is important for the Russians for more than one reason. But here they need their own scholars, who bring a classical Greek literature to the study of the Byzantines and are prepared to devote the best part of their lives to them.

"Unfortunately, the only thing still lacking", adds Uvarov, as the pragmatic policymaker who is not satisfied with ideas alone, "is that this plan still has to be carried out." He does say that there are some developments in this field in Russia, and in this connection he mentions the Zosimos brothers, who financed the edition of work by more than forty names from ancient Greek literature for the sake of young Greeks in Greek schools, and he also makes honourable mention of Matthaei, but the man who provided a truly structural basis for the study of Greek in Russian is Uvarov himself: Sergei Uvarov became the Wilhelm von Humboldt of Russia. This history can be summarized as follows.<sup>98</sup>

On 31 October 1811, precisely ten months after his entrance into office as *popechitel*, Uvarov presented his plan for a new kind of gymnasium. The gymnasium of St Petersburg was the school where this plan was introduced as an experiment.<sup>99</sup> This new gymnasium—seven years of schooling—was expressly intended by Uvarov as a preparation for the university. In practice this meant that subjects which he believed could only really be taught at the university (including such a "dangerous" subject like political economy) were removed from the curriculum and substituted by subjects which were considered fundamental to the development of the Russian identity: Russian language and literature, history of Russia, religious instruction. The number of hours for French and German were halved, Latin was given a more central place, Greek was introduced as a compulsory subject.

This last innovation met with great resistance. This was not

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<sup>98</sup> Whittaker, p. 64-66 and 143-151.

<sup>99</sup> V. Rudakov, s.v. "Gimnaziya", in Brockhaus-Efron, vol. 8, St Petersburg 1893, p. 699.

typically Russian: outside Russia even somebody like Friedrich August Wolf thought it too ambitious. He held that Greek had no place in pre-university education, and Napoleon, in view of the republicanism of many texts from Greek literature, considered it downright dangerous and had in fact prohibited it in France. But Uvarov pressed ahead, not because he so admired classical Athenian democracy, but because in this way he hoped to make the Byzantine roots of Russian culture more clearly visible. On 8 December 1828 a new statute was passed in which Uvarov's plan had been incorporated and on the basis of which *all* gymnasium pupils were taught compulsory Latin and—now for the first time—compulsory Greek, the latter subject from fourth form. In this regard Russia was only twelve years behind Prussia, where Wilhelm von Humboldt with his prestige had succeeded in having Greek introduced in the syllabus of 1816 as a compulsory subject at his *humanistisches Gymnasium*. It was a simply brilliant triumph for Uvarov, since a majority of the *Komitet*, which had deliberated on a new system of education since 1826, was against the introduction of Greek and even Czar Nicholas I regarded education in Greek as a pointless luxury. Without Uvarov's tactical manoeuvring—now shrouded in an impenetrable mist for the historian—he would never have succeeded.

As yet the statutory obligation was not implemented all along the line and Greek was only taught at the gymnasia in the six university cities: Moscow, Kazan, Kharkov, Vilnius, Dorpat, and St Petersburg. There simply were not enough teachers for the subject. This meant that there was employment for those with ambition. And, in fact, towards the end of Uvarov's term of office as a minister, so around the ominous year 1848, Greek was taught at 45 of the 79 gymnasia in Russia. The total number of pupils at these 79 gymnasia through the years is telling:<sup>100</sup>

1809	5,569
1825	7,682
1836	15,476
1848	18,911

These data show that the average gymnasium had about 240

<sup>100</sup> Numbers mentioned by P.L. Alston, *Education and the State in Tsarist Russia*, Stanford 1969, p. 35-36; Rudakov, p. 704, has different numbers: 5,491 in 1824, 19,474 in 1836, 22,730 in 1847; 49 gymnasia in 1824, 78 in 1836, 84 in 1847.

pupils. The 45 gymnasia with Greek therefore must have had just under 11,000 pupils, perhaps even more, since those who finished their studies at a gymnasium with Greek were rewarded by rapid promotion through the official ranks. If we assume that roughly half of the total number of pupils of the gymnasia with Greek also completed the three highest forms, this means that every year some five to six thousand young Russians were familiarized with the principles of Greek grammar and read the story of Odysseus and Nausicaa in the original language.

At the Prussian gymnasium, Uvarov's great example, the classicists could claim a total 40 percent of the available hours.<sup>101</sup> The Russian gymnasium was less "classical": here the gymnasia with Greek could claim no more than 28.5 percent and the gymnasia without Greek no more than 16 percent. But even with this low percentage Latin still received more attention than Russian, which had to settle for less than 14.5 percent, while the modern languages (in Russia French and German) at a gymnasium with Greek were together awarded slightly more than 11 percent. The time spent on Greek in the highest forms of a gymnasium with Greek went to the modern languages and mathematics in a gymnasium without Greek.

Which pupils actually attended the gymnasium? Or, to put it slightly differently, which pupils were actually allowed to attend the gymnasium? In the days of Lomonosov everybody was admitted. The first crops of students at Moscow University even included a few serfs, who were allowed to follow the path of science with special permission from their masters. But this meant nothing: the desire for education was minimal, especially among the nobility. This situation had changed little when Alexander I, at the instigation of his teacher Frédéric-César de La Harpe—the Protagoras of Paris, whom Catherine had brought to St Petersburg—instituted a separate Ministry of Education in 1802. Its official name was the Ministry for the Enlightenment of the People. This was a programmatic and splendid name, but also a name which aroused anxiety in the emperor's circle: it was dangerous to spread too much light, it might give the people wrong

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<sup>101</sup> Whittaker, p. 146, mentions a percentage of 46, which is not correct; cf. Rudakov, p. 696.

ideas.<sup>102</sup> As yet the emperor thought this danger negligible. In 1803-1804 an educational programme was drawn up which is mostly described in very positive terms by modern historians: "the first democratic *école unique* in Europe", wrote Nicholas Hans; Alston is just as appreciative: "Access to the 'democratic ladder' was open to all elements of the population regardless of social, national, or religious origin".<sup>103</sup> Matthaei supplied the text for an academic statute, on the basis of which the three Russian universities (Moscow and the universities of Kazan and Kharkov founded in 1804, which together formed the top of and supervised the entire educational pyramid) were organized after the German model, complete with autonomy, an elected rector, an elected board of governors, a university council consisting of professors and other teachers, and an independent authority to hold examinations, but without "Lehrfreiheit".<sup>104</sup>

Cynthia Whittaker, more sceptical than Hans and Alston, has reminded us that the regulations from 1803-1804 also stipulate that the education should contribute to the ethical schooling of the citizens *in accordance with the duties and customs of each class*.<sup>105</sup> Now it was not the custom of noble families to weary their sons with the ablative absolute or the optative. The nobility preferred schooling in *galanteria*—riding, fencing, dancing, and other forms of aristocratic *savoir-vivre*—to a bourgeois education. The gymnasium was too democratic, there were too many *raznochintsy* in the schoolrooms, pupils who were not highborn and whose parents hoped that the education would in fact offer the possibility of a *carrière ouverte aux talents*.

But education was not intended to function as a channel for vertical social mobility, certainly not by Nicholas I, nor elsewhere in Europe in this period. This principle was subtly put into action: from 1833 onwards 78 percent of the gymnasium pupils belonged to the upper classes. This situation was achieved through

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Alston, p. 21-22.

<sup>103</sup> N. Hans, *Comparative Education*, London 1958, p. 309; Alston, p. 24.

<sup>104</sup> Text of the statute of the fifth of November 1804 in I.M. Soloviev, *Russkie universitety v ikh ustavakh i vospominaniyakh sovremennikov*, vyp. pervy, St Petersburg s.a., p. 23-26. Latin translation: *Alexandri I Imperatoris et Autocratoris Rossorum Omnium Constitutiones et Confirmationes trium Universitatum Rossicarum: Mosquensis, Casanensis et Charcoviensis. Ex mandato Curatoris Universitatis Mosquensis A.C. Rasumovsky lingua latina redditae et editae*, Moscow 1808.

<sup>105</sup> Whittaker, p. 139.

various administrative and financial measures (tuition fees), which made it hard for those at the bottom of the social ladder to climb up, while the extension of the gymnasium years from four to seven—mainly intended to raise the school to West European level—ensured in practice that the three highest forms, the forms in which Greek was taught, contained relatively more pupils from the upper classes.

The prelude to this less liberal policy is to be dated to 1812. Napoleon's campaign and defeat contributed significantly to it: "the attitude of those in power toward schooling changed from a naive spirit of experimenting with Western models to cautious use and jealous control", writes Alston.<sup>106</sup> Education suffered the consequences. The gymnasium became a school for the elite and in 1835 was removed from the jurisdiction of the university, which in turn lost its autonomy and was placed under the administration of the *popechitel*.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless the number of gymnasium pupils of lower birth increased in an absolute if not relative sense, so that in 1840 some people again wondered anxiously whether the thirst for knowledge was not a danger for society. Unlike in 1802 this question was now answered in the affirmative and a number of restrictive measures, mostly in the financial-economic sphere, was taken, which produced the desired effect and form the explanation for the rather small increase in the number of gymnasium pupils in the forties.<sup>108</sup> The ideal of classical education became more and more an ideology.

As I already noted, education in Latin and Greek also increasingly became the hallmark of the social elite outside Russia in the same period. Among the classicists there were those who, far from regretting this development, openly welcomed it. They too were keeping up with the times—in a fashion. Thus there was Gottfried Hermann (1772-1848), a man who in all circumstances preferred to express himself in Latin and who knew so much about Greek grammar and at the same time was so addicted to riding (traditionally a part of aristocratic *galanteria*) that he was known as the "most learned grammarian-on-horseback", *grammaticorum equitum doctissimus*, and often lectured in riding costume

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<sup>106</sup> Alston, p. 29.

<sup>107</sup> Text of the statute of 26 July 1835 in Soloviev, p. 37-46.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Alston, p. 21-36; Whittaker, p. 138-151.

complete with riding boots and spurs. In 1838 he gave a speech as Rector of the University of Leipzig which may be called typical of the "ideologization" of the classics. In this speech he first delivered the customary eulogy on the educational value of the classics: "literature which has no equal, certainly among the ephemera produced nowadays". Next he remarks with professorial earnestness that since the widespread dissemination of the printed word and the increased spread of education have made it much easier nowadays for the common man to provide himself with a broad literary training, something should be left to distinguish a scholar from the people: "it is necessary for scholars to have a language of their own, to prevent their discussions from reaching the ears of the vulgar mass and rousing emotions there and establishing wrong views and breeding contempt for human and divine ordinances".<sup>109</sup>

Gottfried Hermann had many pupils. These include famous names in the history of German "Altpphilologie": Lobeck and also to some extent Lachmann, Bergk and Bonitz, Ritschl and Sauppe, etc. One of these pupils was Christian Friedrich Graefe (1780-1851). Uvarov even mentions that the great Gottfried Hermann himself regarded Graefe as his most competent and most mature pupil, but this is perhaps no more than uncontrolled rhetoric. Uvarov knew a great deal about Graefe. He made some of this knowledge public in a letter which he sent to the Russian Academy of Sciences when Graefe had died, by way of a laudatory and at the same time rather conceited *in memoriam*.<sup>110</sup> Thus we know that Uvarov came into contact with Graefe in the same period in which his career as *popechitel* began.

In 1810 Graefe had become a teacher of Greek at the seminary of the Aleksander Nevsky Monastery in St Petersburg. He owed

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<sup>109</sup> Gottfried Hermann, quoted by F. Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts auf den deutschen Schulen und Universitäten vom Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. 2, Berlin-Leipzig 1921<sup>3</sup>, p. 683.

<sup>110</sup> S.S. Uvarov, "Vospominanie ob akademike Fr. Graefe", *Ucheniya Zapiski Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk po pervomu i tretiemu otdeleniyam*, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1853, p. 46-50. Literature on Graefe: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 9, Leipzig 1879, p. 555-556 (Bursian); E.D. Frolov, *Russkaya istoriografiya antichnosti (do serediny XIX v.)*, Leningrad 1967, p. 110-113. List of his publications: *Bulletin de la classe historico-philologique de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de Saint-Petersbourg*, vol. 9 (1825), p. 365ff.

his appointment to Mikhail Speransky<sup>111</sup>—a fact not mentioned by Uvarov, Speransky in the meantime having become *persona non grata*. Straight after this appointment Graefe also became Uvarov's private Greek tutor, as Uvarov felt that there were too many gaps in his knowledge of the ancient languages. The teacher-pupil relationship lasted fifteen years, the personal bond a lifetime. Graefe benefited greatly from it, which is not to say that he did not deserve to do so. In 1811 Uvarov secured a position for him at the Pedagogical Institute (a teacher training college founded in 1804 and at that time already intended to lead to a full-fledged university). In 1812 Uvarov sent his friend—then an exile in St Petersburg—Freiherr vom und zum Stein to Graefe. Together they daily read a few pages of Thucydides, to relax from the enervating times of the battle against Napoleon. In 1819, when the University of St Petersburg was founded, Graefe became the first Professor of Greek and Latin. In 1818 he became a corresponding member and in 1820 a full member of the Academy. In 1821, by way of a bonus, he was made custodian of the collection of antiquities and coins in the Hermitage.

One good turn deserves another, and indeed Graefe always supported and stimulated Uvarov. The relationship between the two men strongly reminds one of that between the more modest duo from Moscow, Muraviev and Buhle. The likemindedness of Graefe and Uvarov is obvious. Graefe's strong points were in the field of textual criticism—*philologie pure*—and linguistics. Graefe's interest in and knowledge of Sanskrit allowed him to go along with Uvarov's Orientalism, and he too wrote something festive when on 22 March 1818 Uvarov pronounced the speech of the day—in which he elaborates at length on Heyne's appeal from 1768—at the inauguration of two French Orientalists as teachers at the Pedagogical Institute. These two Frenchmen, Jean Baptiste Demange and François Bernard Charmois were, incidentally, forced to step down in 1821 on account of their alleged atheistic views, to the great disappointment of Uvarov.<sup>112</sup> Graefe has various

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Schmid, p. 145 and 175-176.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Schmid, p. 161 and 163. Title of Uvarov's speech: *Rech prezidenta Im. A.N. popechitelya Peterburgskago uchebnago okruga o torzhestvennom sobranii Glavnago pedagogicheskago instituta 22 marta 1818*, St Petersburg 1818. Danish translation: *Tale af Kuratoren for den Peterborgske Underwisings Anfang S.S. Ouwaroff, holden i det Pedagogiske Central-institut a 22 marts 1818*, Copenhagen 1818.

publications to his name in the field of comparative linguistics, in particular on the comparison of Greek and the Slavonic languages,<sup>113</sup> and he heartily concurred with Uvarov's endeavour to make Greek a compulsory subject at the gymnasium.<sup>114</sup>

Another characteristic feature is their common interest in Greek literature from late antiquity, the period of the transition from paganism to Christianity. According to Uvarov, this period was embodied in the person of the fifth-century poet Nonnus from Panopolis in Egypt, and he clarified this position in a book first published in 1818 but already written in 1816: *Nonnos von Panopolis, der Dichter*.<sup>115</sup> It was clearly the work of a pupil of Graefe, for Graefe—financially supported by Uvarov, as would so often happen later—had already published something about Nonnus in 1813<sup>116</sup> and had just started on his great critical edition of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, which he would complete in 1826.<sup>117</sup>

Another favourite Greek poet of Graefe was Paulus Silentiarius, one of the last great poets (sixth century) of epigrams in the Greek Anthology.<sup>118</sup> Thus in 1820 Uvarov, together with Batyushkov and Dmitry Dashkov, published an anthology of Russian translations—those by Batyushkov are splendid—of epigrams from the Greek Anthology, according to Cynthia Whittaker "the single most representative work of Russian neoclassicism" (but printed in an edition of only 70 copies).<sup>119</sup> It was yet another attempt, comparable with Koshansky's anthology from 1811, to open up Greek poetry as a source of inspiration for Russian poetry in accordance with Heyne's recommendation from 1768. Without Graefe Uvarov would not so easily have found his way to Paulus Silentiarius, and without Uvarov and Dmitry Dashkov, then still his friend, who was posted in Istanbul at the time, Graefe would never have

<sup>113</sup> For instance *Lingua graeca et latina cum slavica dialectis in re grammatica comparatur*, St Petersburg 1827.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Whittaker, p. 145 and 280 n. 49.

<sup>115</sup> Reprint of Uvarov's essay on Nonnus in *Etudes de philologie et de critique*, Paris 1845.

<sup>116</sup> *NONNOU TOU PANOPOLITOU TA KATA HYMNON KAI NIKAIAN. Des Nonnos Hymnos und Nikaia*, St. Petersburg 1813, dedicated to Freiherr vom und zum Stein.

<sup>117</sup> *Nonni Panopolitae Dionysiacorum libri xlviii*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1819-1826.

<sup>118</sup> *Pauli Silentiarii descriptio magnae ecclesiae*, Leipzig 1822; *Meleagri Gadareni epigrammata tamquam specimen novae recensionis Anthologiae Graecae*, Leipzig 1811.

<sup>119</sup> *O grecheskoi antologii*, St Petersburg 1820; cf. Whittaker, p. 26-27 and 255 n. 55.



obtained a number of Byzantine manuscripts for his critical studies and would never have published Greek inscriptions from the north coast of the Black Sea.<sup>120</sup>

Perhaps Uvarov would have needed no prompting from Graefe to react to the correspondence between Gottfried Hermann and Friedrich Creuzer concerning the latter's theories about Oriental influences on the Greek myths, especially those involving Dionysus and Hercules. Later Wilamowitz wrote of Creuzer's four-volume *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen* (1810-1812), which Uvarov so greatly admired: "The whole work suited the mystical leanings of the later Romantics and threatened also to befuddle the learned", who regarded it as "a Revelation alleged to have been received in the dark ages and diffused all over the world through secret cults".<sup>121</sup>

In the summer of 1840 Uvarov travelled to Saxony and seized the opportunity to pay a visit to Hermann in Leipzig. Unfortunately, Goethe had died eight years ago, so that Uvarov's ardent wish to consult the oracle of Weimar in person was never fulfilled. He had cherished this wish since 1810, when he had dedicated his book on Nonnus, written in German as a tribute to German "Altertumswissenschaft", to Goethe—"unter Ihrem Schutze bin ich gesichert", he had written, the icy Humboldt of the Neva.<sup>122</sup> Goethe respected Uvarov, Friedrich Schlegel respected him even more (he is reported as saying that he could not endure a young Russian nobleman being as learned as himself),<sup>123</sup> but Graefe respected him most. In 1850 he confided to Uvarov (then former

<sup>120</sup> *Inscriptiones aliquot Graecae, nuper repertae, restituuntur et explicantur*, St Petersburg 1841.

<sup>121</sup> *Über das Vorhomerische Zeitalter. Ein Anhang zu den Briefen über Homer und Hesiod, Herrn Professor und Ritter G. Hermann zu Leipzig und Herrn Hofrath und Professor Fr. Creuzer zu Heidelberg zugeeignet*, St Petersburg 1819, reprinted in 1821 and in the *Etudes de philologie et de critique*, p. 269-287. Written with reference to Hermann's *Briefe über Homer und Hesiod*, Leipzig 1818. Uvarov's *Examen critique de la fable d'Hercule commentée par Dupuis* (1818; also reprinted in the *Etudes*) refers to Hermann's third letter to Creuzer; cf. Wilamowitz, *History of Classical Scholarship*, p. 112.

<sup>122</sup> The date of the last letter (Goethe to Uvarov) is 28 November 1830. Cf. Georg Schmid (see note 88); S.S. Uvarov, "Notice sur Goethe" (an obituary note), *Etudes de philologie et de critique*, p. 359-374, also in S.S. Ouvaroff, *Esquisses politiques et littéraires*, Paris 1848, p. 205-226. In 1826, thanks to Uvarov, Goethe had become foreign honorary member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (on the occasion of its first centennial).

<sup>123</sup> Whittaker, p. 27.

minister): "It is unfortunate that you became a minister. You might otherwise have become a good Greek scholar, but in that case you would have had to pay more attention to Greek grammar, for you do not hold it in sufficiently high regard".<sup>124</sup> Muraviev-Matthaei, Muraviev-Buhle, Buhle-Koshansky, Uvarov-Graefe: the mutual adulation is evident and was doubtless sincere. The outsiders, and they were in the majority, were disregarding. But with his 1828 gymnasium Uvarov succeeded in making them toe the Greek line, a "safe" Greek, the Greek of grammar and particles. If perchance there was an insider who undermined the established reputation of one of the gentlemen, he would be elegantly dismissed, as the following case proves.

Karl Ludwig Struve was born in 1785 and was a student in Göttingen (where else?) from 1801 to 1802.<sup>125</sup> In 1802 he was awarded a gold medal for his book on the ancient theories about the soul after death.<sup>126</sup> He obtained his D.Phil. with a dissertation on Propertius in 1803.<sup>127</sup> On 15 September 1804 the brand new gymnasium of Dorpat opened its doors. Struve held the inaugural address—on upbringing and education in antiquity<sup>128</sup>—and became the first Greek master. At the same time he became a unsalaried lecturer in the University of Dorpat. It was still the age of optimistic faith in progress through enlightenment. He lectured on Homer, Sophocles, and Herodotus, on Horace and Juvenal, on antiquities and ancient history, on mythology, and even on grammar. He hoped for a professorship. Karl Ludwig Struve was the young man of 22 years who in 1807 in a book of 220 pages conclusively demonstrated that Matthaei's *Clytemnestra* could not possibly be by Sophocles.<sup>129</sup> It was a brilliant achievement, but Matthaei did not have to return his diamond ring and Koshansky saw no reason to exclude *Clytemnestra* from his treasury of Greek poetry...

Five years later, on 15 September 1812, the foundation day of

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<sup>124</sup> Uvarov, "Vospominanie Graefe", p. 50.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 38, Leipzig 1893, p. 687-690 (L. Stieda).

<sup>126</sup> *De doctrina Graecorum et Romanorum de statu post mortem*, Altona 1803.

<sup>127</sup> *Observationum et emendationum in Propertium edendarum specimen*, Altona 1804.

<sup>128</sup> *De educatione et institutione puerorum apud veteres*.

<sup>129</sup> *Sophoclis, ut voluit, Clytemnestrae fragmentum, post editionem Mosquensem principem edi curavit, notis adiectis*, C.L. Struve, Riga 1807.

the gymnasium in Dorpat, Karl Ludwig Struve again held a speech: *Der Feldzug des Darius gegen die Scythen*. It was the week of Napoleon in Moscow, smoking Moscow. Yet Struve's speech attracted interest far beyond Dorpat. It was a typical Christian Gottlob Heyne speech: Struve interpreted Herodotus' story about Darius' unsuccessful campaign against the freedom-loving Scythians from Southern Russia as the prefiguration of Napoleon's campaign against Russia. Had not the Scythians successfully defended themselves by continually retreating, taking their supplies with them, and deliberately burning their land? "A free people, devoted to its country, its sovereign, and the faith in its ancestors, forced Darius into an ignominious retreat. It would have destroyed the predator altogether, had not cowardice and self-interest [i.e. of the Ionian Greeks who refused to demolish the bridge which Darius had built across the Danube] come to the assistance of tyranny." At the end of October 1812 the Russian translation of this speech was published in *Syn Otechestva* ("Son of the Fatherland");<sup>130</sup> Napoleon was on his way to the Berezina. Struve, then, criticized the Greeks, made ancient history topical, and represented Darius as Napoleon and not as the wise king from the East.

Struve made his way to St Petersburg and paid a call on Graefe and Uvarov. Still he hoped for a professorship. Had he not behaved himself admirably in the war? Had he not proved himself a worthy son of his new country? After all, he had emigrated to Dorpat to avoid recruitment as one of Napoleon's grenadiers.<sup>131</sup> The University Council of Dorpat proposed his name for appointment, but the appointment fell through after higher powers had intervened. Disappointed, Struve took up theology, for he now wished to enter the ministry. In 1813 he took the necessary degree, preached a successful probationary sermon in Estonian in a village fifteen kilometres outside Dorpat, but was not given the office. Then he left for Königsberg, where he became the Director

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<sup>130</sup> "Pokhod Dariya v Skifiyu", *Syn Otechestva* 1812, No. 4, p. 125-141. The words quoted are on p. 141. There are three German reprints: 1812, 1813 and 1822.

<sup>131</sup> Struve came from a Danish-German family in Schleswig-Holstein; cf. R. Pipes, *Struve, Liberal on the Left, 1870-1905*, Cambridge, Mass., 1980<sup>2</sup>, p. 3 (the man whom Pipes mentions as the founder of the Russian branch of the family was a younger brother of Karl Ludwig).

of the Altstädtisches Gymnasium. He felt melancholy at heart. He proved to be a director full of drive and energy, and under his leadership the gymnasium flourished for 25 years. He himself became very friendly with one of Gottfried Hermann's truly most brilliant pupils, Christian August Lobeck, who was professor in Königsberg from 1814 until his death in 1860 and joked there about Creuzer's mystical and in his view nonsensical expositions.<sup>132</sup>

On 13 January 1820 he again delivered a speech.<sup>133</sup> This time it was in Königsberg, on *Die Ungewissheit der Alten Geschichte...*

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<sup>132</sup> Cf. Sandys, vol. 3, Cambridge 1908, p. 103-104; Wilamowitz (English edition), p. 111-112.

<sup>133</sup> Published in his *Abhandlungen und Reden*, Königsberg 1822.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### AERE PERENNIUS: ALEXANDER PUSHKIN

On 17 April 1817 the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg, the destination of Batyushkov's "Walk" from 1814, welcomed a new president: Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin (1763-1843). Batyushkov reacted with enthusiasm: at last a president "without pedantry, without a pot-belly, and without self-importance", he wrote in a poem which praises Olenin for always finding time, despite all his various obligations, "to impart some warmth to the Muses shivering in the cold snowdrifts of our country". "He lives and breathes only for the good, and can draw like Mengs and write like Winckelmann".<sup>1</sup>

Pushkin was less enthusiastic about Olenin: "a cipher with two legs" he called him, clarifying this image on one of his draft papers for *Eugeny Onegin* by drawing the initials of Olenin's name (A.O.) in an anagram in which the bottom of the O rests on the cross bar of the A. Nabokov shares Pushkin's negative judgement and describes Olenin as a conservative careerist who was too fond of his decorations and who "no doubt did not relish his [i.e. Pushkin's] immoral verses, his amours, his addiction to stuss". From 1828, moreover, Olenin was a member of the *Glavny Upravlenie Tsensury*, the committee which supervised censorship, and this was an institution with which Pushkin, of course, was often at loggerheads.

But we should not forget, Nabokov adds, that together with others, for instance Aleksandr Turgenev, Olenin also managed to prevent the poet from being banished by his emperor to the desolate Solovetsky Monastery in the White Sea, "where, a hundred years later, the Soviets were to have one of their most infamous and inhuman concentration camps".<sup>2</sup> I also add that the forementioned anagram already adorns the frontispiece of the

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<sup>1</sup> K.N. Batyushkov, *Sochineniya*, izd. P.N. Batyushkovym, vol. 3, St Petersburg 1886, p. 444-445: "Pismo A.N. Oleninu ot 4 iyunya 1817".

<sup>2</sup> A. Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin*, translated from the Russian with a commentary by Vladimir Nabokov, vol. 3, Princeton 1975, p. 199-200 and 206-207 (henceforward abbreviated as Pushkin EO Nabokov).

first edition (1820) of Pushkin's first great poem, *Ruslan i Lyudmila*, where it has a positive significance.<sup>3</sup>

Who rejected whom? For some time Anna Olenina, Olenin's daughter, was Pushkin's great love. In his mind, and indeed on paper, he already called her Annette Pouchkine. In 1819 he had first been admitted to her father's salon on the Fontanka, where on a memorable evening he had read to her Krylov's fable of the donkey and the farmer. Anna had just turned eleven. But less than ten years later, on 18 July 1828, she noted in her diary that Pushkin could not keep his eyes off her elegant, tiny feet, "glissant sur le parquet" during a ball in St Petersburg in the cold winter of 1827-1828. "Parmi les singularités du poète était celle d'avoir une passion pour les petits pieds."<sup>4</sup> But Anna did not feel at ease faced by the sarcasm, too arrogant and above all too intelligent for her, which his blue eyes would sometimes direct at her; nor did she like his moods of introspective gloom. Yet for one year they played cat and mouse—"she looks like a shrewd and frisky mouse" wrote an observer of the game, Vyazemsky, to his wife; Pushkin, rather, saw in the mouse a "sweet little dragon". Marriage seemed within reach, but nevertheless fell through. According to some, Olenin was quite eager to greet Pushkin as his son-in-law, but Pushkin had failed to appear on the time agreed for the announcement of the marriage; according to others, it was Olenin who thwarted Pushkin. The latter account seems more likely, since at the same time Olenin personally signed the warrant placing Pushkin under police surveillance. In any case Pushkin was more interested in the game with Annette than in the prospect of sharing through marriage in the pleasures attendant on the possession of many thousands of serfs.<sup>5</sup>

Aleksei Nikolaevich was a magnate and a Maecenas. In the *Russian Biographical Dictionary* he is described as an artist, archaeologist, and writer.<sup>6</sup> But he did not write much of importance, did

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Pushkin's letter to Gnedich of March 24, 1821, in: J.Th. Shaw (transl. & ed.), *The Letters of Alexander Pushkin*, Madison 1967, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> Olga Oom (ed.), *Dnevnik Anny Alekseevny Oleninnoi*, Paris 1936, quoted by Nabokov in Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 3, p. 201-202.

<sup>5</sup> Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 3, p. 202 and 206; E.J. Simmons, *Pushkin*, Cambridge, Mass., 1937, p. 286; D. Magarshack, *Pushkin, A Biography*, London 1967, p. 212 and 215.

<sup>6</sup> I. Kubasov, s.v. "Olenin", *Russky Biografichesky Slovar*, vol. 12, Moscow 1905, p. 215-224; Mary Stuart, *Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar. Aleksei*

not carry out excavations, and the expressions of his artistic calling were confined to a number of drawings and engravings.<sup>7</sup> Most interesting are the ninety-two vignettes with which he illustrated the collection of poems presented by Derzhavin to Catherine the Great in 1795. They were executed in sepia, Indian ink, and as water colours. All the motifs derive from Greek mythology and antiquity,<sup>8</sup> which is not so surprising considering that Olenin had moved from his native city Moscow to St Petersburg in 1774 and had taken up residence there with his aunt, the formidable Ekaterina Romanovna Dashkova (1744-1810), whom Catherine had appointed *directrice* of the Academy of Arts. Of course, his aunt also introduced him to her great friend Catherine, and thus it came about that in 1780 Olenin was sent to Dresden on Catherine's own initiative to be trained there as an artillery officer and at the same time to be acquainted with the cultural treasures of this city: the Gemäldegalerie, the Antikensammlung, the Kupferstichkabinett, the Kunstakademie, etc. None of this was wasted on Aleksei Olenin. He stayed there much longer than originally planned, became familiar with the work of Lessing and above all Winckelmann, learned in passing how to handle a cannon, and returned in 1785 to St Petersburg.

There he embarked on a military career. In 1795 he left the service as a colonel, illustrated Derzhavin's volume of poetry for Catherine, and started on a civil career, which resulted in the high office of state secretary. In this period he became one of the closest assistants of Mikhail Mikhailovich Speransky, who until 1812 was the moving spirit behind the enlightened politics of Alexander I.<sup>9</sup> From 1806 to 1808 Olenin was once again a soldier. This time he left the service as a general, and was so proud of it that he always walked around in his splendid uniform. Speransky's fall in 1812 left him temporarily sidetracked, but this did not

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*Nikolaevich Olenin and the Imperial Public Library*, New York 1986.

<sup>7</sup> *Arkheologicheskie trudy*, 2 vols., St Petersburg 1877-1882; part of his correspondence has been published by V.V. Latyshev, *K istorii arkheologicheskikh izsledovaniy v yuzhnoi Rossii*, St Petersburg 1888; cf. also s.v. "Olenin" in D.A. Rovinsky, *Podrobny slovar russkikh graverov*, St Petersburg 1895.

<sup>8</sup> Reproductions of the illustrations in the first two volumes of the Academy edition of Derzhavin's complete works; more on the illustrations: F.I. Buslaev, *Moi dosugi*, Moscow 1886, 2.

<sup>9</sup> M. Raeff, *Michael Speransky, Statesman of Imperial Russia 1772-1839*, The Hague 1957, does not mention Olenin.

last for long. Owing to his accumulation of functions—his work in the committee entrusted with supervising the construction of the Isaac Cathedral deserves particular mention—he remained one of the most influential figures in St Petersburg until the end of his life.

Aleksei Olenin is a difficult man to characterize with any precision. Batyushkov and Pushkin (and in the latter's footsteps Nabokov) are not exceptional in their opposite judgements of him. His opponents regarded him as a sycophant who was always currying favour with his superiors, a diplomat who exercised extreme caution in his dealings with others and who could rarely be induced to offer a pronounced opinion, a hypocrite who was not averse to acting as an informer when it suited him and to strutting with borrowed plumes. No doubt there was some truth in this. Yet Emperor Alexander called him a "Tausendkünstler", and it is hard to imagine that anyone could stay at the top so long and could earn so much approval from critical minds if there was only drab mediocrity carefully concealed under a thin layer of gilt. The right connections alone are not enough; Olenin had abilities as well, especially in the social intercourse within the circle of the intelligentsia in St Petersburg, where he was regarded as a "true European".

Olenin cherished a special preference for two of his many functions. One was that of President of the Academy of Arts, the other that of Director of the Imperial Public Library. In both functions he did a great deal of good work. He also had a salon, a general meeting-place for all those with a literary or artistic reputation. Olenin's salon was thus highly important for the cultural life of St Petersburg in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Mikhail Muraviev, six years older than Olenin, was a regular visitor until his death in 1807. The two gentlemen were close friends, and friends of one were also friends of the other. They were even related by marriage. Sergei Uvarov was another popular guest. He wrote about Olenin and his salon in his *Literary memoirs*.<sup>10</sup> From 1812 the two gentlemen met regularly to supervise the periodical *Syn Otechestva* ("Son of the Fatherland"). But

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<sup>10</sup> *Literaturnye vospominaniya* (signed A.B.), *Sovremennik* 27, No. 6 (1851), p. 37-42; family relation: Batyushkov, *Sochineniya*, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1887, p. 48 n. 1; more on Olenin's salon: *ibidem*, p. 48-57.



Olenin had long before exerted a strong influence on Uvarov: Olenin was the man who aroused Uvarov's patriotic enthusiasm for everything to do with ancient Russian culture.<sup>11</sup> The ideas which Uvarov had earlier culled from his reading of, among others, Heyne and Schlegel, ideas which I discussed in the previous chapter, found an ideal environment in Olenin's salon for further development: classical literature as the source of inspiration for the native literature.

The salon met weekly to discuss all news, barring political items. No poem could be circulated, no book published, no letter written, no theatre production open that was not commented on in Olenin's salon on the Fontanka. Sometimes, indeed, dramatic work might find its first impulse there, as happened with the work of Vladislav Aleksandrovich Ozerov (1769-1816), the last Russian author of classical tragedies in alexandrines. The connoisseurs of the theatre—as the guests of Olenin's salon were—had not failed to notice that the earlier tragedies of authors such as Sumarokov and Knyazhnin, with their cerebral classical loftiness, no longer found much favour with the public. Notably August von Kotzebue appealed much more to the sentiments of the spectators. The tearful so-called bourgeois drama became the new vogue in St Petersburg too and the plays of Sumarokov and the like were suddenly called *pseudo-classical*. But where was the Russian Kotzebue?

He appeared in 1804 in Olenin's salon and read aloud there his play *Oedipus in Athens*: Vladislav Ozerov. The piece was classical (or pseudo-classical) and at the same time its sentimentality complied with the change in taste. Everybody expressed their delight, but not everybody was or remained delighted. There were those who thought that the classical rules of the three unities, etc. should not be sinned against, others supported Ozerov. The latter included Olenin, certainly after hearing from Derzhavin that the emperor himself wished to see Ozerov's *Oedipus*. Given his expertise on Greek antiquities, Olenin was the obvious person to provide the scenery and costumes. "There you are, true talent is always honoured", Olenin remarked to Derzhavin. But despite his successes—successes critics attributed less to Ozerov

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<sup>11</sup> C.H. Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Education: An Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786-1855*, DeKalb 1984, p. 15 and 250-251 n. 15.

than to the actress Ekaterina Semonova—Ozerov remained a controversial character, so much so that at one point Ozerov decided to lay his Ossian pen aside. At that moment Olenin appeared and managed to persuade Ozerov to write a play about *Polyxena*, on the basis of the *Iliad*. It was to be Ozerov's final and according to Mirsky also his best piece, "genuinely evocative of the atmosphere of the *Iliad*".<sup>12</sup> It is based on Euripides' *Trojan Women*.

Two themes were favourite in Olenin's salon and were believed by the *habitués* to be closely related: the admiration for the classics and the desire to stimulate Russian culture, in particular Russian literature. A third theme dealt with what was called archaeology: the collecting of antiquities, Greek, Roman, and, last but not least, Russian antiquities. All this was governed by a distinctly patriotic spirit.

Catherine the Great could have wished for no better first director for her Public Library than Aleksei Olenin. The library was not hers, but it had been her idea to set up a public library in St Petersburg. The books had been brought together as a private collection in the first half of the eighteenth century by two Polish brothers, Józef and Andrei Zalusky. In 1747 they had bequeathed everything to the state. In 1794, the year in which Tadeusz Kosciuszko's Polish rebellion was crushed, the collection—250,000 books—was moved to St Petersburg. Count Choiseul-Gouffier, a well-known dilettante in matters of ancient art—was entrusted with running the library under the supervision of Count Stroganov. In 1792, in connection with the political situation in France, he had fled from Constantinople, where he was the French ambassador, to St Petersburg and was welcomed there with open arms by Catherine on account of his *Voyage pittoresque en Grèce* (1782). The librarian was not kept very busy, the books being temporarily laid up because the collection first required an appropriate accommodation. The first part of the colossal new building—the front graced, of course, with a Ionic portico—was completed in 1811 (the third and final part—still in a neoclassicistic style—exactly a hundred years later). Choiseul-Gouffier could thus take the opportunity to have plaster casts made of the Parthenon reliefs in Athens. He was the first to do so. Unfortunately for

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<sup>12</sup> D.S. Mirsky, *A History of Russian Literature*, ed. by F.J. Whitfield, New York (Vintage Russian Library) 1958, p. 68.

Winckelmann the casts arrived too late for him to see them. In 1802 Choiseul-Gouffier returned to France. After an interval of some years his position was taken over by Olenin in 1808. In 1811 Stroganov died and an administrative reorganization followed, in which the library came under the Minister of Education and Olenin was given the status of director. The library was to be opened to the public in 1812, but instead, on account of Napoleon's undesirable sojourn on Russian soil, all the manuscripts (10,000) and most of the books (150,000) were brought to safety somewhere east of Lake Ladoga. Thus it was not until 2 January 1814 that the Director of the newly named Imperial Public Library could open the doors of the library to the public for three days a week.<sup>13</sup>

Not that the public immediately flocked to use it. If we are to believe the Soviet historian K. Abramov, less than 400 visitors came to the library annually in the first years from 1814. If we are to believe the Dutch Slavist K. van het Reve, this is a gross exaggeration: "according to the memoirs of a contemporary, the library was frequented by just three people: a Catholic priest who came to read Baronius, a merchant looking for an advertisement in old newspapers, and the Polish publicist Przeclawski, to whom we owe this information".<sup>14</sup> But the library was open in the evening, and even much later this could not be said of many a large library in Western Europe. The regulations carefully stipulated that the library was only "public" to well-dressed gentlemen who were true lovers of science and Enlightenment.

Olenin's tasks as a director were made lighter by three librarians. Two of these three must be mentioned first: Nikolai Ivanovich Gnedich (1784-1833) and the Russian Aesop, the writer of fables Ivan Andreevich Krylov (1768 or 1769-1844). Like Pushkin they were admitted to Olenin's salon on the Fontanka. After all, he had given them employment. Krylov, it would seem, took it mainly as affording an excellent opportunity for sleeping

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<sup>13</sup> Brockhaus-Efron, *Entsiklopedichesky Slovar*, vol. 3<sup>a</sup>, St Petersburg 1891, s.v. "Biblioteka", p. 790-792.

<sup>14</sup> K.I. Abramov i V.E. Vasiltsenko, *Istoriya bibliotchnogo dela v SSSR (do 1917g.)*, Moscow 1959, p. 50-54; K. van het Reve, *Geschiedenis van de Russische literatuur*, Amsterdam 1985, p. 69. The differences between Abramov and van het Reve on the one hand and the article "Biblioteka" in Brockhaus-Efron on the other hand are illuminating. In 1850, the first year for which there is trustworthy evidence, the library was frequented by 8,000 visitors, in 1858 by 35,000 visitors: so it all turned out well in the end.

(according to van het Reve), which raises the question of how he managed to expand the collection of Russian books, which in 1808 could literally be numbered on the fingers of one hand, to 30,000 and to catalogue them as well, and when he found time to wrote his hundred and ninety-eight splendid fables (77,000 copies of his books were sold during his lifetime, a far cry from the seventy copies of Uvarov's collection of epigrams from the Greek Anthology).

Nikolai Gnedich has a curious history. He knew Greek well, but where he learnt it is not quite clear. Not, in all likelihood, at the seminary of his native town Poltava. Possibly he received some Greek tutoring at the college in Kharkov which he attended for a few years, but this is not certain. We do know that from 1800 to 1802 he was a student, together with Roman Timkovsky, at the University of Moscow, and that he conceived his great passion for Homer there. His Greek tutor is said to have been P.A. Sokhatsky, of whom there is not much more to say. Of Nikolai Gnedich, by contrast, a great deal more can be said. His knowledge of Greek benefited the Russian language by enriching it as a medium for poetry and benefited the Russian reading public as the "consumer" of this poetry through his translation of the *Iliad*—the first translation in Russian hexameters, a translation unsurpassed since its publication in 1829. Gnedich's *Iliad* was most widely read during the first four decades of the twentieth century. In this period the work went through seven editions in Russia, five of which were published in the ten years from 1903 to 1912.<sup>15</sup> What portrait do we have of Gnedich the romantic? And what is his *curriculum vitae*?<sup>16</sup>

Nikolai Gnedich belonged to the small group of people who

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<sup>15</sup> Years of publication: 1903, 1904, 1905, 1912 (two editions), 1935 and 1936. On Gnedich as a translator: I.I. Tolstoi, "Gnedich kak perevodchik "Iliady", in: Gomer, *Iliada*, perevod N.I. Gnedich, Moscow-Leningrad 1935, p. 101-112; A.N. Egunov, *Gomer v russkikh perevodakh xviii-xix vekov*, Moscow-Leningrad 1964, p. 147-295.

<sup>16</sup> Data mainly based on G. Georgievsky, s.v. "Gnedich", *Russky Biografichesky Slovar*, vol. 5, Moscow 1905, p. 410-427; id., "A.N. Olenin i N.I. Gnedich. Novye materialy iz Olenkago Arkhiva", *Sbornik otdeleniya russkago yazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, vol. 91, Nr. 1, St Petersburg 1914; cf. also I.N. Medvedeva, "N.I. Gnedich", in: N.I. Gnedich, *Stikhotvoreniya*, Leningrad 1956, p. 5-55.

have no enemies because they are always prepared to see the good in others. He was not a member of any distinct literary movement and could afford to publish in liberal journals without being execrated by the opponents of the liberals. "Gnedich has one very splendid and rare quality", his friend Konstantin Batyushkov wrote: "he has a childlike simplicity in searching for the beautiful in what he reads. He is capable of truly complete enjoyment, and this makes him so rich. He does not read a great deal, but he reads well". Childlike simplicity: when Batyushkov went mad in 1823, at the age of thirty-six, and stayed mad for the rest of his life, thirty-one years, Gnedich was the only one of his old friends who continued to visit him and Gnedich was the only one whom Batyushkov still wished to see. A sensible and peaceable man, obliging and patient, sensitive and diligent, and highly susceptible to Ossian's nebulous sentimentality, Shakespeare's piercing tragedy, and Homer's heroism.

Nikolai Gnedich was the son of a landowner who died young and far from wealthy. He himself never became rich either, but he bore his poverty cheerfully and not without grace. Without exception his contemporaries describe him as a man with a strong character, strong convictions, and strong affections. He also had a strong inclination to withdraw into himself. And he needed strength, for as a child he had had smallpox and since then it was painful to behold him: his dark-pale face was totally disfigured, covered with horrible scars, and his right eye was completely gone. He had never enjoyed good health. From his twenty-fifth year (1809) his medical history had been one of protracted illness. Only in 1825 did he decide to do something about it. He went to the mountains, to a sunny health resort in the Caucasus. There he contracted a new disease, a catarrh in the chest. In 1827 he again put himself under medical treatment in Southern Russia, this time for a whole year. It helped a little, but in 1830 he suffered a complete setback and was afflicted by yet another ailment: his throat played up. A treatment with artificial mineral water in Moscow was to no avail. Doctors diagnosed dilatation of an artery in the chest. Tuberculosis of the bone. Gnedich himself attributed his ailment to overstraining of his throat and lungs during rehearsals of tragic roles by the prima-donna of lachrymose drama, Ekaterina Semonova. In 1833 he contracted influenza, which proved fatal. He died at the age of 49.

In 1803 he had obtained a meagre position as a clerk at the newly founded Ministry of Education in St Petersburg. This he probably owed to Mikhail Muraviev. Aleksei Olenin became his benefactor by getting him an additional job at the Imperial Public Library and by making his life otherwise more bearable and gaining some recognition for him, including a membership of the Academy of Sciences. Nikolai Gnedich loved his work, which was mainly in the field of drama and poetry. He considered himself expert at declaiming, which he did with broad gestures, enormous articulation, and at the top of his voice. His auditors would sometimes have their hearts in their mouths: with all that bellowing and theatrical shouting, consumption might get the better of him, one of them once remarked. As long as he kept his mouth shut and one did not look at his face, especially at his right eye, it was not too bad: Gnedich had a fine figure, strikingly tall and slim, straight as an arrow, majestic. He was supple and deliberate in his movements, and despite his disfigurement had an engaging manner owing to the energetic and at the same time friendly look in his sound left eye and the charm of his smile.

He prided himself on being well-groomed, and was noted for it, even in an environment where many wished to cut an elegant figure. His was an elegance on the verge of dandyism. How he managed was a mystery to everyone, but somehow he always succeeded in dressing according to the very latest fashion. From early morning to late at night he walked around in a frock-coat, his frill was always as white as virgin snow, and he held it necessary to change clothes three times a day in order to harmonize the colour of his frock-coat and other garments with the hour of the day: in the morning the dominant colour was brown or green, in the afternoon blue, in the evening usually black. He wore close-fitting gloves in a matching colour, and shoes, hat, and cane, everything was immaculate. Some who were less nice in such matters called him a poseur, *l'homme aux échasses*, but would do so in a tone of mild indulgence. He was so eager to show that he belonged and was so proud of associating with the high and mighty. He never married: Anna Olenina and her friends did not have the childlike simplicity to believe that Mme. le Prince de Beaumont's fairy-tale *La Belle et la Bête* was not just that.

Light-hearted and spiritual conversation was, of course, another distinguishing mark of the *beau monde*. Conversation in French,

or at least larded with—*pardon, lardée, ou bien embellie de*—French words. This was a tall order for good Nikolai Gnedich. His proficiency in French was above all reading proficiency. Speaking French was an altogether different matter, and his pronunciation was quite *affreux*. It was not so difficult to refer to Russian ladies by semi-French names (“Princesse Catiche, Comtesse Bibi”)—but to stay on the safe side he waited until they had left the room. Incidentally, he allowed no gallicisms in his literary work, unless one takes these to include Russian words like *naivnost*, *gratsioznost*, *intimnost*, words which were dear to him and which he possibly introduced into Russian.

But when he started to declaim in French, matters became difficult. “Such a ridiculous spectacle always made me listen with fascination”, wrote one of his friends, Stepan Petrovich Zhikharev, referring to the story of one evening when Nikolai Ivanovich declaimed Shakespeare in Zhikarev’s house, in a self-made French translation of Hamlet’s scene with the ghost. Gnedich uttered both parts of the dialogue with such strange capers and such howling that the host’s dog took refuge with his master, crawling under the couch and whining. It was a high-flown, dragging recitation, with Nikolai Ivanovich at full blast, his neck rising higher from his trunk with every following line like Dracula emerging slowly but inexorably from his coffin, his larynx ever wider and thicker like a toad threatening to blow himself up, his head tilted high backwards, one eye on ascension, the other eye ..., ah, Nikolai Ivanovich, “we do it wrong, being so majestic”. Criticism? No, no criticism, do not laugh, it would have made him so sad, in his beautiful black frock-coat and his spotless frill. “A tout prendre, c’était une bonne connaissance à cultiver.” And he liked to speak in aphorisms. Almost all these Hellenophiles do, Zhikharev remarked.<sup>17</sup>

In reciting fragments from the *Iliad* Gnedich would usually carry on in a less gripping manner. Homer was his ruling passion; no sore throat or catarrh could keep him from his Homer. And Homer was also Olenin’s favourite poet. Thus the Maecenas and the minstrel had something to talk about and write letters to each other about. In 1807 Gnedich started on a metrical translation of the *Iliad* in alexandrines. He began with Book 7, doubtless

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<sup>17</sup> Georgievsky, 1905, p. 415.

because before the turn of the century a translation of the first six books, also in alexandrines, had already been published by E.I. Kostrov and to do the first six books again would be to duplicate that labour. The translation work produced material for many evenings of magnificent declamation. The *beau monde* was in raptures. Olenin introduced the poet himself to the literary soirées of the empress mother. She was not Catherine, the Great, the "Semiramis of the North"—indeed, Maria Fyodorovna was notoriously peevish and bad-tempered, a chronic grumbler—but it was nevertheless an honour, and with luck one might meet Joseph de Maistre.

In actual fact Gnedich had no proficiency in writing alexandrines, let alone in declaiming them. He was much better at hexameters, which even sounded musical. But Gnedich was not to be deterred and doggedly pursued his alexandrines, even though deep down he was not entirely satisfied. In 1813 he had reached Book 11. Two events are mentioned which made him decide to do the whole thing again, this time starting at the beginning.

The first incident occurred during an evening of declamation which included Pushkin in the audience. Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin yawned. Being a gentleman, he covered his mouth with his hand, but nevertheless—he yawned. Gnedich was aghast, for he loved Pushkin as a good father loves his son. And Pushkin returned this affection, as his letters to Gnedich amply testify. Pushkin's yawn was therefore a source of great alarm. Gnedich promptly asked Pushkin what was wrong with his verses. Pushkin answered in a cryptogrammatical quatrain:<sup>18</sup>

I do not want to fight with you  
for reasons of your rugged rhyme  
I put my hand on it  
and splinters sting my touch.

The second event was a letter from Sergei Uvarov, in which Gnedich was advised, in an authoritarian but of course diplomatic and rhetorically approved manner, to try the hexameter. The Russian

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<sup>18</sup> A.S. Pushkin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, izd. AN SSSR, vol. 2, 1947, p. 495 and 1203. Date uncertain, probably 1819-1820. See also vol. 3, p. 238, 256 and 286; vol. 13, p. 27-28; R. Burgi, *A History of the Russian Hexameter*, Hamden, Conn., 1954, p. 141-153.



language—Uvarov lectured—is admirably suited to the hexameter, as was well-known since Tredyakovsky and Radishchev (“whom the Russian muses mention not without sorrow”, he added) and his “dactylotrochaic knight”.<sup>19</sup>

In the same year 1813 during a literary soirée Gnedich read aloud his first effort in hexameters: Book 6 of the *Iliad*. At the official opening of the Imperial Public Library on 2 January 1814 he delivered a speech in which, following the views of Heyne, Uvarov, and Olenin, he pointed out the significance of the ancient classics for Russian literature. In 1817 he wrote a poem entitled *Rozhdenie Omera*, “The birth of Homer”. The year 1829 saw the birth of his Homer, when the complete translation of the *Iliad* appeared in print. It was a masterpiece. Pushkin was enthusiastic; Uvarov was satisfied; and even Belinsky had no criticism. Only Gnedich himself remained incorrigible: he was more boastful about the honour of becoming an in-law of some or other general than about his literary achievement.

After his death in 1833 Gnedich was buried in the cemetery of the Aleksandr Nevsky Monastery. On his tombstone was engraved *Iliad* I, 248, where Nestor is said to be such a gifted orator. In Gnedich’s own translation:

rech iz ust ego veshchikh, sladchaishiya, meda lilisha  
 “his tongue powrd forth a flood of more-than-honey-sweet  
 discourse” (translation Chapman)

Gnedich and Krylov had become close friends in their library. When Krylov died in 1844, they rejoined each other’s company, side by side, in the cemetery of the Aleksandr Nevsky Monastery. Ivan Andreevich Krylov sleeps peacefully. His fables are still read today. Now and again Nikolai Ivanovich Gnedich turns in his grave.

Olenin gave somebody else a job in his library: Konstantin Nikolaevich Batyushkov. In 1812 he became assistant custodian of the manuscript collection. Batyushkov, like Gnedich, had a second position as a clerk at the Ministry of Education, which he obtained in 1802 (at the age of fifteen) through the agency of

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<sup>19</sup> S.S. Uvarov, “Otvét V.V. Kapnisty na pismo ego ob eksametre”, *Chteniya v Besede lyubiteli russkago slova* 17 (1815), p. 46-67, esp. p. 58-61; Burgi, p. 98-110.

Mikhail Muraviev. Another familiar name worked there as well: Radishchev, not the famous Aleksandr Nikolaevich (who committed suicide in the same year 1802), but his son Nikolai Aleksandrovich (1799-1829), poet and admirer of Byron. Moreover, the director of this chancellery was the enthusiastic and persevering Ivan Ivanovich Martynov (1771-1833), since his student days at the Aleksandr Nevsky Seminary close friends with his fellow-student Mikhail Speransky, a man who from the 1790's did his utmost—without quite realizing what he was letting himself in for—to make no less than all the Greek classics accessible to his Greekless countrymen through (prose) translations. It occupied him his whole life. Between 1823 and 1829 the harvest could be reaped: twenty-six volumes of *Grecheskie Klassiki* ("Greek Classics"). The series not only included Homer (*Iliad* and *Odyssey*), Pindar, Sophocles, and Herodotus, but also authors like Hesiod, Aesop, Callimachus, Longinus, and Anacreon. Each volume contained the original Greek text, a Russian translation, and a commentary. Martynov belonged to an older generation, if not so much in age as in respect of his archaic style, which was abundantly decked out with Church Slavonicisms in the choice of words and turns of phrase, and was castigated on this account by Martynov's younger contemporaries Zhukovsky, Batyushkov, and Pushkin. Yet the twenty-six volumes were a great achievement and a boon to the interested reader in the province.<sup>20</sup>

Konstantin Batyushkov was neither so persevering nor such a public servant.<sup>21</sup> He had already been in the army, from 1807 to 1810, when he had left the service as a second lieutenant (*podporuchik*), and in 1812 he preferred to fight against Napoleon than to examine old manuscripts. But he was declared unfit. So, instead, he went to Moscow all by himself. He arrived there a few days before the Battle of Borodino and after it immediately set about bringing Muraviev's widow to safety in Nizhny-Novgorod from the French "barbarians" (as he understandably called

<sup>20</sup> On Martynov see E. Kolbasyn, *Literaturnye deyateli prezhnego vremeni*, St Petersburg 1859, p. 5-168; there is also an autobiographical sketch by Martynov: "Avtobiograficheskiya zapiski", *Zarya* 1871, No. 6, p. 73-110. Martynov also was the publisher of *Severny Vestnik*.

<sup>21</sup> Data derived from L.N. Maikov, "O zhizni i sochineniyakh K.N. Batyushkova", in: K.N. Batyushkov, *Sochineniya*, izd. P.N. Batyushkovym, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1887, p. 1-317, summarized by the same Maikov s.v. "Batyushkov" in *Russky Biografichesky Slovar*, vol. 2, Moscow 1908, p. 575-591.

them). In March 1813 he was allowed to re-enter military service. He became aide-de-camp to General Raevsky, was injured in the *Völkerschlacht* near Leipzig, learnt German in Germany and became enthusiastic about the German classics, especially Schiller, crossed the Rhine and followed the triumphant entry of Emperor Alexander I into Paris, where he enjoyed himself thoroughly for two months, both culturally and otherwise. In 1814 he travelled via London, Gothenburg, and Stockholm back to St Petersburg, where he wrote his "Walk to the Academy of the Arts". In 1815 he left the service, re-entered the payroll of the Imperial Public Library in 1817, now as "honorary librarian", but soon resumed his travels, going to Moscow, Odessa, Olbia, and then in 1819 via Warsaw, Vienna, and Venice to Rome and Naples. In 1821 he was given sick leave, in 1822 he made an unsuccessful suicide attempt, and in 1823 he lapsed into permanent insanity. "Unbridled imagination" was the diagnosis.

Batyushkov's literary work is brimful with references to antiquity. Even the most obscure characters from Greek mythology turn up in his poetry. A count of all the names occurring in the index of names to Batyushkov's works in Blagoi's edition published in Moscow and Leningrad in 1934 shows that more than 40 percent (356 on a total of 884) belong to characters or figures from Graeco-Roman mythology or history. He translated poems by Horace and Tibullus (actually pseudo-Tibullus, but this was yet to be discovered), went to see the Apollo Belvedere in Paris, wrote a poem "Two rivals: Homer and Hesiod" (*Geziod i Omir soperniki*), visited Baiae and Pompeii, climbed the Vesuvius, and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, wrote the splendid translations of a number of epigrams from the Greek Anthology. In short, it was not for nothing that he was called "one of our best classical poets". How did Batyushkov get his knowledge of and admiration for antiquity?

The answer to this question leads us once again to Mikhail Muraviev, and to Aleksei Olenin, and to Sergei Uvarov, in that order. Without any exaggeration Muraviev can be called Batyushkov's spiritual father. The first information about their relationship dates back to 1802 (Batyushkov was fifteen years old, it will be remembered), but in view of the family connection it seems likely that the relationship went back further. In his younger years at school Batyushkov had been almost exclusively intro-

duced to French and French literature, though he was already learning Italian. But he did not learn Latin, let alone Greek. Muraviev changed this.

In his spare time Muraviev always read Greek historians, not with Batyushkov, who was not old enough, but with his friend and relative Ivan Matveevich Muraviev-Apostol (1765-1851). Like Mikhail Muraviev, he was a father who would remember the Decembrist Conspiracy for the rest of his life: Ivan Matveevich was the father of Sergei Ivanovich Muraviev-Apostol, the man who, while being hanged with the four other leaders of the rebellion, found his head slipping out of the noose, because the executors of the sentence, inexperienced in this kind of work, had failed to make the noose tight enough. "In Russia they can't even decently hang somebody", he grumbled while picking himself up and receiving the noose around his neck for the second time. Ivan Matveevich was also the father of Ippolito Ivanovich Muraviev-Apostol, his youngest son, who put a bullet through his head when he saw Sergei, in an armed clash between the rebels and government troops, lying so heavily wounded and unconscious in a pool of blood that he thought he was dead. And Ivan Matveevich was the father of Artamon Ivanovich Muraviev-Apostol and Matvei Ivanovich Muraviev-Apostol: on the same day that their brother Sergei was finally hanged after much ineptitude, on 13 July 1826, they departed on foot and in chains for the rest of their lives to their place of exile in Siberia, where after arriving they contributed to the medical care of the local inhabitants and where Matvei started a school for them and taught them to grow potatoes. For I.M. Muraviev-Apostol in 1802, however, all this was still safely hidden in the lap of the gods.

Ivan Matveevich himself was one of the most glorious representatives of the Russian Enlightenment in the time of Catherine the Great. Besides French and German he also knew English, Italian and Spanish, as well as Greek and Latin, and during his stay in the West he had established contacts with figures like Klopstock, Kant, and Alfieri. He also wrote extensively on the Catilinarian Conspiracy.<sup>22</sup> Of course, with the passing of years the literary *jeunesse dorée* of St Petersburg saw him merely as a

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<sup>22</sup> I.M. Muraviev-Apostol, "Vzglyad na zagovor Katiliny", *Syn Otechestva* 46 (1818), No. 21, p. 41-59; No. 22, p. 81-100; No. 23, p. 121-135.

hopelessly outdated classicist of the old school, but Batyushkov was more balanced in his judgement. He had got to know him well, not only in his early years, but later also, in 1812, when they fled from Moscow together for Napoleon and lived in the same apartment as evacuees in Nizhny-Novgorod.

Mikhail Muraviev was the man who saw to it that Batyushkov grew to maturity, that he became enthusiastic about the art of antiquity, and that he learned Latin. He was probably taught Latin by Muraviev himself, but some indications also suggest the services of a man whom we have lost sight of in the meantime but who was also in St Petersburg in this period and of whom we shall hear more: Nikolai Koshansky. The result of these lessons was that after a reasonably short time Batyushkov was able to read Latin authors more or less independently and in fact did so. Virtually all the famous names from Latin literature can be found in Batyushkov's work, Horace and Tibullus being clearly at the top of the list. Not that this is very significant, since all the famous names from Greek literature can also be found in Batyushkov's work, and Batyushkov even translated Greek epigrams, though he never learned Greek. The influence of Greek poetry on Batyushkov's oeuvre was entirely indirect, via translations.

This can be illustrated with examples. Thus Koshansky had included an idyl by Bion in his anthology of Greek poetry from 1811, in Greek and with his own Russian translation. There can be no doubt that Batyushkov's poem *Druzhestvo* ("Friendship") from 1812 is a free paraphrase of this translation.<sup>23</sup> As early as 1809, in reply to Gnedich's suggestion that he should translate one of Theocritus' idyls, Batyushkov wrote to him that Koshansky had already translated the same poem, directly from the Greek and not "after that miserable translation by Firmin Didot" and that Koshansky would soon publish this translation. We do not know which idyl they are talking about, since Koshansky never published a Theocritus translation, but the story shows that Batyushkov knew Koshansky personally, that his own Greek translations were not translations from the Greek, but that he presumably received assistance from Koshansky.<sup>24</sup> Likewise he must have

<sup>23</sup> Greek text: *Bucolici Graeci*, ed. A.S.F. Gow, Oxford 1952, p. 163; translation by Koshansky in his *Tsvety grecheskoi poezii*, Moscow 1811, and in *Pamyati Leonida Nikolaevicha Maikova*, St Petersburg 1902, p. 193.

<sup>24</sup> Text of the letter: K.N. Batyushkov, *Sochineniya*, izd. P.N. Batyushkovim,

been helped with his translations of the epigrams from the Greek Anthology, which he published together with Uvarov.<sup>25</sup> One would be inclined to think that Uvarov helped him, as indeed he did: Uvarov first translated the epigrams into French.<sup>26</sup> Batyushkov's translation (1817) of a fragment from Lucian's essay on historiography is based on the French translation which he had received from an acquaintance of Uvarov, the Frenchman J.N. Belin de Ballu, Professor of Greek in the University of Kharkov (1803-1811) and subsequently (from 1811 until his death in 1815) at the Pedagogical Institute in St Petersburg.<sup>27</sup> Finally, his poem about the rivalry between Homer and Hesiod from 1816 is a translation of a French poem: *Combat d'Homère et d'Hésiode* by Charles Hubert Millevoye (1782-1816), a man given to writing elegies on dying poets and falling leaves.

The importance of the influence of the Greek and Latin poets on Batyushkov's poetry lies mainly in the perfection of its form and the light-footedness of its contents. Perfection in light-footedness, this was above all Batyushkov's goal, and he found models for this light-footedness not only in Voltaire's "anthological" poems and the "déguisements de Vénus" of Parny, who was very highly thought of by the young Russian gentlemen of his day, but also in the Greeks and Romans. One can state categorically that Batyushkov would never have acquired the reputation of being one of Russia's most classical poets without his knowledge of ancient poetry. But it is also true that he mastered this knowledge largely—and with regard to Greek poetry completely—via the medium of translation in combination with what was available in the way of further reading on the world of antiquity. This not only applied to Batyushkov, but also to somebody like Zhukovsky: he had no Greek either, but during a stay in Germany he engaged the services of a German professor called Grashof, who wrote the German meaning word for word above the Greek in Zhukovsky's edition of the *Odyssey*. This gave Zhukovsky a sufficient grasp of the text to be able to complete Gnedich's work in

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vol. 3, St Petersburg 1886, p. 45-46; cf. the comment by V.I. Santov, *ibidem*, p. 616-617.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 1, St. Peterburg 1887, p. 284-290 and 421-434. The Greek text is based on the *Analecta* edited by Philippe Brunck.

<sup>26</sup> The French translations are also printed in *O grecheskoi antologii*.

<sup>27</sup> Batyushkov, *Sochineniya*, vol. 2, St Petersburg 1885, p. 341-343 and 345.

1847 by placing his *Odyssey* next to Gnedich's *Iliad*. The Russian literary historian Prince Mirsky wrote: "The two Russian Homers are in a most happy way mutually complementary, and if Gnedich's *Iliad* is our highest achievement in the grand manner, Zhukovsky's *Odyssey* is unsurpassed as a heroic idyl".<sup>28</sup>

And what about Pushkin? Let us go back to the year 1811, which in the previous chapter was called an important year in the history of Russian *klassitsizm*. Pushkin and *klassitsizm*, how are they related?

So far I have only talked about Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman*. The beginning of that poem clearly refers to Batyushkov's "Walk". Pushkin highly admired Batyushkov and long regarded him and Zhukovsky as his great examples and teachers in poetic matters.<sup>29</sup> But *The Bronze Horseman* is a poem in which the reader finds none of the mythological imagery rarely lacking in Batyushkov. This is precisely one of its strong points, according to Bayley, and he is right: "it does not—like *Faust* or *Prometheus Unbound*—create a world of its own to image man's condition and the forces that determine it. It brings the past into the present, using history and fantasy to give a yet sharper reality to an actual place and event".<sup>30</sup> *The Bronze Horseman* contains just one reference to antiquity: the name Triton is mentioned somewhere, a faint echo of the most famous of St Petersburg's "suburbs", Tsarskoe Selo, which is now simply called Pushkin and where the young Pushkin possibly spent the happiest years of his life, his years at the *Imperatorsky Tsarsko-Selsky Litsei*, later known as the Alexander I Lyceum of Tsarskoe Selo, the years 1811-1817. In the second half of these years Pushkin wrote some 130 poems, of which about 30 were published between 1814 and 1817. Others were discovered only after his death.<sup>31</sup>

Like Batyushkov's work, these poems abound in mythological references and comparisons. Chloe and Cupid, Apollo and

<sup>28</sup> Mirsky, p. 79.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. L.N. Maikov in K.N. Batyushkov, *Sochineniya*, izd. P.N. Batyushkovim, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1887, p. 252-258 and 313-316; P. Morozov, "Pushkin i Batyushkov", in: A.S. Pushkin, *Sochineniya*, izd. S.A. Vengerov, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1907, p. 144-154.

<sup>30</sup> John Bayley, *Pushkin, A Comparative Commentary*, Cambridge 1971, p. 164.

<sup>31</sup> Magarshack, p. 50-55.

Phoebus, Mars and Venus, Orpheus and Morpheus and other members of their set cheerfully flutter through these early poems. And a systematic search through the later work produces quite a few more as well. Pushkin knew his classics and his knowledge was not confined to the great names, such as Homer and Pindar, Plato and Plutarch, Sophocles and Euripides. He mentions not only Anacreon, but also much less familiar lyricists such as Theocritus and Hedylus, Xenophanes of Colophon, and Moschus. But at first sight it would seem that the Latin component of classical literature is more amply represented: Horace, Virgil, Catullus, Propertius, Tibullus, Ovid, Phaedrus, Juvenal, and, of the prose-writers, Cicero, Cornelius Nepos, Seneca, Petronius, Pliny, Tacitus, Suetonius, Apuleius, and even Aurelius Victor. In view of all this and more it is understandable that notably some Russian classicists around 1900 sharply underlined the stimulating influence of antiquity on Pushkin's literary talent and that they highlighted here the role of Pushkin's Latin master at the Lyceum, Nikolai Koshansky.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> P.N. Chernyaev, "Vliyanie shkoly, obstanovki i epokhi na razvitie v A.S. Pushkine lyubvi k antichnomu miru", *Gimnaziya* 11 (1898), Nr. 6, p. 1-9; idem, "A.S. Pushkin i antichny mir", *ibidem* 12 (1899), Nr. 6, p. 17-48; idem, *A.S. Pushkin kak lyubitel antichnago mira i perevodchik drevneklassicheskikh poetov*, Kazan 1899; idem, "Puti proniknoveniya v Rossiyu svedenii ob antichnom mire v svyazi s kratkoi kharakteristikoi lits, prolavavshikh eti puti", *Filologicheskaya Zapiski* 51 (1911), p. 130-133; S. Lyubomudrov, *Antichny mir v poezii Pushkina*, Moscow 1899; idem, *Antichnye motivy v poezii Pushkina*, St Petersburg 1901. The heavy emphasis on the importance of the ancient world is still absent in V. Gaevsky, "Pushkin v Litsee i litseiskaya ego stikhotvoreniya", *Sovremennik* 97 (1863), p. 129-177 and 349-399. Pushkin and Koshansky: N. Piskunov, "N.F. Koshansky", in: Pushkin, *Sochineniya*, izd. Vengerov, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1907, p. 254-259; A. Malein, "Nikolai Fyodorovich Koshansky, Pamyati Leonid Nikolaevicha Maikova", St Petersburg 1902, p. 194 and 199-209. Malein (albeit a classical scholar) was sufficiently sceptic to tone down the importance of the classical influence: A. Malein, "Pushkin i antichny mir v litseiskiy period", *Germes* 1912, No. 17, p. 437-442 and 467-471. From the Soviet period (*non vidi*): N.F. Deratani, "Pushkin i antichnost", *Ucheniya zapiski Moskovskogo gosud. pedagog. instituta im. V.I. Lenina*, kafedra istorii vseobshchei literatury, vyp. 4 (1938), p. 5-34; I.I. Tolstoi, "Pushkin i antichnost", *Uchen. zapiski Leningradskogo gosud. pedagog. instituta im. A.I. Gertsena*, kafedra russk. literatury, 14 (1938), p. 71-85; M.M. Pokrovsky, "Pushkin i antichnost", *Vremennik Pushkinskoi Komissii*, 4-5 (1939), p. 27-56; idem, "Pushkin i rimskie istoriki", *Sbornik statei posvyashchennykh V.O. Klyuchevskomu*, Moscow 1910; D.P. Yakubovich, "Antichnost v tvorchestve Pushkina", *Vremennik Pushkinskoi Komissii* 6 (1941), p. 160-180. Some recent work: Ilona Opelt, "Pushkin und die klassische Antike", *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 68 (1986), p. 185-215; M. von Albrecht, *Rom: Spiegel Europas*.



Pushkin, as is well-known, belonged to the first elect group, thirty in number, who received their education at the Lyceum of Tsarskoe Selo. This school was solemnly opened on 19 October 1811 in the presence of Emperor Alexander himself and a large number of his most senior servants. These included Sergei Uvarov, who was just putting the finishing touches to his memorandum for a new style of gymnasium. Unlike the gymnasium conceived after the German model, the Lyceum had been set up after the example of the French *lycées* of 1802. This type of school in turn derived its name from the Lycée which had existed in the Rue Saint-Honoré since 1786 and where the Frenchman Jean François de Laharpe (1739-1803; first a Voltairean, later a confirmed and fervent Catholic; not to be confused with Alexander's Swiss teacher, Frédéric-César de La Harpe) gave his "cours de littérature". The Parisian Lycée was not a real school. It was more a private institute where lectures were held. Laharpe's lectures were published under the title *Lycée, ou Cours de littérature ancienne et moderne* (1799-1805). This became a famous handbook. It was the first attempt to provide a survey of the history of *world* literature, even if the emphasis lay on French literature, in particular on Racine. Laharpe's handbook became compulsory reading for the pupils of the Lyceum in Tsarskoe Selo, and so for Pushkin as well.

The idea of founding the Lyceum in Tsarskoe Selo is usually attributed to Mikhail Speransky.<sup>33</sup> His friend, the translator I.I. Martynov, is known to have been intensively involved in carrying out the idea. Martynov drew up the statute and the regulations of the school. The underlying idea was to create a type of school which could serve as a breeding ground for the university and where the education of competent high-ranking public servants could be provided with a firm basis. The idea dates from the period in which Alexander I was still receptive to anything related to the Enlightenment. It forms a whole with the idealistic plans for educational reform in 1803-1804. However, a Russian lyceum as a *type* of school was never to be realized. The Lyceum of Tsarskoe Selo remained a unique institution until it was closed in 1917. It was an extremely elitist institution, exclusively open—after an entrance examination—to boys from noble families. The

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*Texte und Themen*, Heidelberg 1988, chs. vi, x, xii and xiv.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Raeff, *Michael Speransky*, p. 60-63.

luxurious boarding-school was housed in a wing of the imperial palace in Tsarskoe Selo at some 20 kilometres from St Petersburg. To protect the pupils from undesirable outside influences they were not allowed to leave the grounds during the first three or four years of their stay. These grounds naturally consisted of a park with its obligatory open-air museum of classicistic statues. Education and accommodation were free of charge in the early years (later it became an expensive school). Everything was provided for. As one student from the years 1832-1838 (approximately the last years of Pushkin's life) put it: "From the first day I was aware of a tremendous change for the better in my circumstances. ... everything filled me with a self-respect which I had never felt in the gymnasium".<sup>34</sup>

Although the German *Gymnasium* won the competition with the French *lycée* in Russia, Pushkin never attended a gymnasium and certainly in his time all kinds of enlightened ideas about education and training held their own, despite vehement protests from Joseph de Maistre and his anti-rationalist and anti-liberal sympathizers.<sup>35</sup> For Pushkin the Lyceum came just in time. Had it not come, his parents, wanting to get rid of their too impetuous and too restless son, would have sent him to a Jesuit boarding-school in St Petersburg. He owed his immediate admittance to the first group both to the active intervention of Aleksandr Ivanovich Turgenev (whom we already encountered as a student in Göttingen) and to the circumstance that the wealthy noble families disliked the idea of sending their sons to a boarding-school for six years and only being allowed to visit them during vacations, so that in the early years the Lyceum was attended by many children from impoverished noble families.<sup>36</sup>

One of the progressive elements of the "style" of the Tsarskoe

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<sup>34</sup> K.S. Veselovsky, "Vospominaniya o Tsarsko-Selskom Litsee, 1832-1838gg.", *Russkaya Starina* 104 (October 1900), p. 17-18, quoted by A. Sinel, *The Classroom and the Chancellery*, Cambridge, Mass., 1973, p. 38. On Veselovsky see his biographical sketch in *Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk 1889-1914*, vol. iii, *Materialy dlya biograficheskogo slovarya deistvitelnykh chlenov Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, ch. 1, Petrograd 1915, p. 162-164.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. on the tenor of his criticism J. de Maistre, "Cinq lettres sur l'éducation publique en Russie, à Monsieur le comte Rasoumowski, ministre de l'instruction publique (Juin 1810)", *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 8, Paris 1884, p. 163-232.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Magarshack, p. 26-31; on Jesuit education in those days see M.J. Rouet de Journel, *Un collège de Jésuites à Saint-Petersbourg 1800-1816*, Paris 1922.

Selo Lyceum was that no form of corporal punishment was allowed. "A great advance in comparison to the flogging and other brutal practices characteristic of the best English and Continental schools of the time", Nabokov rather proudly notes.<sup>37</sup> The teaching was not only designed to develop intellectual skills and impart knowledge. According to Speransky's original conception, the senior positions which the pupils would later be called to fulfil required that character building be a main focus of attention and it was hoped that this could be realized through intensive contacts, including extracurricular ones, between teachers and students. It was wrong, Speransky had written in 1808 in a disquisition on the school of his dreams addressed to Alexander I, to cram heads full of matter which had to be learnt by heart; rather the pupils should be encouraged to put forward their own ideas, and it was the primary task of the teachers to ensure that the pupils left the school with "une tête bien faite plutôt que bien pleine".

The success of such a high pedagogical ideal depends entirely on the dedication and the inventiveness of those who must give shape to it in their daily work, the teachers. From childhood Pushkin was self-willed enough not to have his mind stuffed with matters which failed to interest him. In fact, for the rest of his life Pushkin looked back on his years in Tsarskoe Selo as golden years. This can only mean that his teachers largely succeeded in realizing Speransky's conception (derived in turn from Pestalozzi). The Russian teachers were all very young, Koshansky being the oldest at thirty. Vasily Fyodorovich Malinovsky (1765-1814) was the first principal. He was a pronounced liberal, an advocate of constitutional monarchy, critical of autocracy, and a confirmed opponent of serfdom. He had translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into Russian and had written a book called *War and Peace*, in which he predicted that there would one day be a league of nations in Europe to settle conflicts between the states. He was an inspiring man, who did not discourage political discussions within his school.

The man with the greatest influence on the pupils—Pushkin always paid most attention in his class—was probably Aleksandr Kunitsyn (1783-1840). He had just returned from a two-year stay

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<sup>37</sup> Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 3, p. 130; Ya. Grot, *Pushkin, ego litseiskie tovarishchi i nastavniki*, St Petersburg 1887, is still fundamental.

in Gottingen in 1811 and taught ethics, logic, and law at the Lyceum. At the inauguration he had the honour of delivering a speech in the presence of the emperor and his high retinue. In it he took the liberty of developing the idea that legislators could not expect the people to abide by their laws if they did not obey them themselves. This was not far from the ideas of Aleksandr Radishchev, and in 1821 Kunitsyn was in fact forced to resign as a professor in the University of St Petersburg.<sup>38</sup>

The French master was apparently an interesting character too. His name was David de Boudry and he liked dictation and theatre. He was a small, shrivelled man, who liked to play the strict teacher, but with his paunch and his thin, greasy powdered wig rarely succeeded. At the same time there was something of a stray Jacobin in his appearance. He did not wash often and changed his underclothes just once a month. He claimed to be the brother of no less a person than Jean Paul Marat. Boudry could tell his pupils in Tsarskoe Selo many stories about his brother (or alleged brother)<sup>39</sup> and about the way he was murdered in his bath by Charlotte Corday d'Arnout. He also liked to tell the story of how his brother had once taken him to a hospital where he was shown the miseries which afflict men who visit prostitutes and contract a venereal disease. It was most instructive.

Boudry will not have needed to teach Pushkin a great deal of French, as Pushkin knew the language inside out at the age of twelve and was called "the Frenchman" by his fellow pupils. He not only knew the French language, but also French literature. Voltaire was his great hero, and he also admired the rather malicious Jean-Baptiste-Louis Gresset (1709-1777) and above all Evariste Parny, the author of the *Poésies érotiques* who so fascinated Batyushkov too and who made such lavish use of the words *tendre* and *tendresse* that he appears in Pushkin's *Eugeny Onegin* as *neznyj Parni*, "tender Parny". And since Parny and Voltaire (and also André Chenier, whose work Pushkin read intensively in the years 1820-1824) incorporated large chunks of antiquity in their work, it can safely be assumed that much of Pushkin's know-

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<sup>38</sup> See Whittaker, p. 81 and 269 n. 59 and 60; *Russky Biografichesky Slovar*, vol. 9, Moscow 1903, p. 551-552.

<sup>39</sup> Many scholars accept out of hand that Boudry was indeed a brother of Marat. Nabokov is not so certain on that question, and his argumentation deserves more attention: see Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 3, p. 136-137.

ledge of antiquity came to him through this French channel. Laharpe's *Cours de littérature* formed a similar channel. Moreover, we should not forget that Pushkin was already an avid reader before he came to Tsarskoe Selo. He probably knew Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in the French translation (18 volumes, Paris 1788-1795) of Leclerc de Sept-Chênes and it is certain that hidden away (so as to be unfindable at bedtime) behind his father's broad tub chair in his study, he read Plutarch and Homer in a French translation at the early age of nine.<sup>40</sup>

In Tsarskoe Selo he read Homer again, this time in Kostrov's Russian translation, and his reading of Plutarch, an author who was also known to the Decembrists and whose glorification of heroism and love of liberty demonstrably appealed to their imagination<sup>41</sup>—no doubt contributed to the fact that later, in 1821, the year of the Greek War of Independence, he took it to be self-evident that the Greeks should be applauded in their conflict with the Turks as the legitimate descendants of the heroes of Marathon and Salamis. He hoped that Russia would come to the assistance of the Greeks (as Catherine might have done), he himself in his own way came to the aid of the Greeks with a fiery poem (*Voina*, "War"), and he even wished to follow in Byron's footsteps by going off to fight in Greece. Three years later, however, in a letter written on the occasion of Byron's death, harsh reality had evidently brought him down to earth: "it is unforgivable puerility that all enlightened European peoples should be raving about Greece. The Jesuits have talked our heads off about Themistocles and Pericles, and we have come to imagine that a nasty people, made up of bandits and shopkeepers, are their legitimate descendants and heirs of their school-fame. ... If you would come to us in Odessa to look at the fellow countrymen of Miltiades, you would agree with me." In another letter from the same period Pushkin writes about a Greek militia which crossed his path: "A crowd of cowardly beggars, thieves, and vagabonds. ... As for the officers, they are worse than the soldiers. We have seen these Leonidas in the streets of Odessa and Kishinev—we are personally

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<sup>40</sup> Magarshack, p. 21-22; Plutarch probably in the translation by Amyot, Homer certainly in the translation by Paul Bitaubé: *Ilias* 1780, *Odysee* 1785.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. M. Wischnitzer, *Die Universität Göttingen und die Entwicklung der liberalen Ideen in Russland im ersten Viertel des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1907, p. 142-143; *Russky Biografichesky Slovar*, vol. 13, Moscow 1902, p. 599-615.

acquainted with a number of them, we attest of their complete worthlessness—they have found the art of being dull even at the moment when conversation with them ought to interest every European....; they will endure anything, even blows of a cane, with composure worthy of Themistocles. I am neither a barbarian nor an apostle of the Koran, the cause of Greece interests me acutely; this is just why I become indignant when I see these poor wretches invested with the sacred office of defenders of liberty".<sup>42</sup>

Pushkin never learnt German. What he read of German authors was via translations or adaptations by, among others, Zhukovsky and his contemporary and best friend at the Lyceum, Anton, Baron Delvig, or in French translations (Schiller, for instance), and for the rest his knowledge (or that of Vladimir Lensky in *Eugeny Onegin*) was based on his reading of Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* ("a very mediocre work", notes Nabokov).<sup>43</sup> This did not prevent Thomas Mann from calling Pushkin the "Goethe of the East",<sup>44</sup> an honorary title which no doubt, if he heard of it, sorely grieved Pushkin's *bête noire* Sergei Uvarov, who rather fancied himself as the Goethe of the East.

Nor did Pushkin ever learn Greek, which was not taught at the Lyceum. Later he even declared himself openly against Uvarov's plans to introduce Greek and Latin as compulsory subjects at the gymnasium. He thought it a needless luxury which would benefit no one<sup>45</sup> and for all his admiration for the Greek poets he always made do with French translations.

Pushkin did learn Latin, which was taught at the Lyceum. There is little reason to believe that he enjoyed it, apart from the one year (from May 1814 to June 1815) when Koshansky was on sick leave (among the pupils it was rumoured that he suffered from *delirium tremens*) and was replaced by Aleksandr Ivanovich Galich (1783-1848).<sup>46</sup> Galich was not a Latinist at all. Galich was a

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<sup>42</sup> Magarshack, p. 121-122 and 150-151; *The Letters of Alexander Pushkin*, translated etc. by J. Thomas Shaw, Madison 1967, p. 161 and 167.

<sup>43</sup> Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 2, p. 230-231.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas Mann, "Russische Anthologie" (1921), *Altes und Neues, kleine Prosa aus fünf Jahrzehnten*, Frankfurt 1953, p. 468.

<sup>45</sup> Whittaker, p. 145.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. A. Nikitenko, "Aleksandr Ivanovich Galich, byvshy professor filosofii v S-Peterburgskom universitete", *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya* 141 (1896), otdel nauk, p. 1-100 (on Galich and the Lyceum see p. 21-23); Grot, p. 24-26; Ya. Kolubovsky, *s.v.* "Galich", in Brockhaus-Efron,

philosopher. In 1808 he had been sent abroad together with eleven other graduates from the Pedagogical Institute of St Petersburg (including Aleksandr Kunitsyn) to continue their studies there. These twelve selected candidates were predestined to get chairs at the future University of St Petersburg. Galich was the son of a deacon. As a philosopher he became one of the first followers of Schelling in Russia. Instead of the intended three years he had stayed abroad for five. Most of the time he had spent in Germany, where in Gottingen he became enthusiastic about Schelling's philosophy, but he had also travelled to Paris, London, and Vienna. In 1813 he was back in St Petersburg, where problems arose concerning his thesis. In the view of the examining board, it contained too much that was new, "speculations which in philosophical circles are acceptable to no one or to only a few". Moreover, Galich was advised not to introduce his own system into his teaching in the future, but to abide by the books prescribed authoritatively. The manuscript of his thesis was not allowed to be printed. Uvarov completely concurred in this and Galich was merely appointed as an assistant professor. In 1814 he was given the additional task of teaching Latin.

The enjoyable thing about Galich's Latin classes for Pushkin and not only for Pushkin was that he actually did no Latin at all. When Koshansky went on sick leave on account of what was officially called "white fever", the boys had just reached the point where they could figure out a bit of Phaedrus and Cornelius Nepos, naturally in the bowdlerized versions of Koshansky (his editions of these two authors came out in 1814 and 1816). Galich mainly spent his time chatting informally about matters of general interest. Only now and then would he demonstratively look up a Latin text of Nepos and say something like: "Gentlemen, let us fiddle a little with this old man". This made a deep impression on the youths, and their memories of it were later recorded by various of them. All the same they learnt a great deal from Galich. His broad philosophical schooling, his original mind, and also the expressive way in which he brought the most abstract and abstruse matters to the attention of his pupils ensured that they

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*Entsiklopedichesky Slovar*, vol. 7<sup>a</sup>, St Petersburg 1892, p. 923-924; E.L. Radlov, "A.I. Galich", in Pushkin, *Sochineniya*, izd. Vengerov, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1907, p. 241-246; A. Elnitsky, s.v. "Galich", in *Russky Biografichesky Slovar*, vol. 4, Moscow 1914, p. 169-175.

never forgot him. They loved their eccentric philosopher, who also regularly invited them to modest festive meals. Later Pushkin was grateful for the fact that Galich had always encouraged him to go his own way and even Pushkin occasionally needed such encouragement. Without Galich Pushkin would not have written two of his Lyceum poems: *K Galichu* ("For Galich") and *Poslanie k Galichu* ("Message to Galich"). In a third poem, called "Revelling students" (*Piruyushchie studenty*), Galich is the only teacher who is not only mentioned but is even given an entire stanza.

Galich came to a sorry end. Even Uvarov was powerless in his attempts to save him (and Kunitsyn) in 1821. Obscurantism ran riot: Galich was accused of having proclaimed anti-Christian views. He was found guilty and his accusers triumphantly led him into a church, where he was doused with holy water. He was no longer permitted to teach. He therefore had ample time for research, and sought consolation by writing two books: two immense studies, "General Law" and "Philosophy of the History of Mankind". In 1839 or 1840 fire broke out in his house. The entire manuscripts of both books, almost ready for the press, were lost. Galich gave up. In the last eight years of his life he merely pottered about. In his private life he was unlucky too: his extremely ugly, extremely stupid, and extremely malevolent wife made it easy for him, despite his disbelieving nature, to believe firmly in the truth of the aphorism that marriage is the highest form of asceticism.

Nikolai Fyodorovich Koshansky, then, was Pushkin's regular Latin master. We have encountered him before, as Buhle's assistant, as Muraviev's protégé, as *professeur manqué*, and as the probable Latin master of Pushkin's great example Batyushkov. He had not come to Tsarskoe Selo for money. The move from Moscow to St Petersburg reduced his annual income from 5850 to 3000 roubles. Koshansky, with enthusiastic theatricality, tried to present himself in his new position as a Greek and Latin master of the old school at a time when it was still a brand-new school. Nevertheless, he did his utmost, in his own way, to approach his pupils in accordance with the progressive pedagogical ideas of the founder and first principal of the Lyceum. Now in teaching Latin grammar there is little scope for fostering independence and creativity, but fortunately Koshansky also taught Russian literature. In these classes he would explain when a poem could be



counted as *belles-lettres*. This took the form of solemn expositions in which he explained and compared all kinds of texts in the manner which he later recorded in his two handbooks of rhetoric. Koshansky also read Ossian in class, in Kostrov's translation. This appears to have been quite a success: Ossian's work was passed from hand to hand in the Lyceum and for a while was favourite reading for Pushkin, who at the time rated Ossian among the best poets, better even than Homer. In his desire to inculcate a sense of aesthetic taste in his pupils, Koshansky held forth on the visual arts on the basis of Winckelmann's writings. Classical culture was dealt with on the basis of his translation of Eschenburg. Various classical names and data from Eschenburg's book can in fact be found in Pushkin's work. But, in view of his enormous passion for reading during his years at the Lyceum, it seems likely that Pushkin read more literature about antiquity, in particular the *Voyage littéraire en Grèce* or *Lettres sur les Grecs anciens et modernes* (1772-1783) by Pierre Augustin Guys.

Occasionally Koshansky's pupils were allowed to offer a sample of their own literary skills, either on a set subject or on one of their own devising. In the latter case Koshansky would not only consider elegance in formulation, but also inventiveness in the choice of subject. In due time he even encouraged them to write poems, which he would read in class and provide with comments. Later some of his pupils mentioned this appreciatively in their memoirs. "We loved Koshansky". Quite often one also finds the story of how Koshansky succeeded in making Pushkin's friend Baron Delvig so enthusiastic about incorporating classical motifs in his Russian poetry that Nabokov could later characterize Delvig pithily as "half amphora half samovar". Delvig, incidentally, obtained a position as an assistant to Krylov at the Public Library in 1821.<sup>47</sup>

Pushkin did not like Koshansky. No wonder, since Pushkin in his literary finger exercises did not care a straw for the poetic and rhetorical rules of the day and Koshansky was precisely the man who knew the rules down to the last detail, believed in them, and was solemnly and pedantically convinced that nothing good could come of beginners going their own way. "Stick to the

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<sup>47</sup> Van het Reve, p. 113; Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 3, p. 23; A. Borozdin, s.v. "Delvig", *Russky Biografichesky Slovar*, vol. 6, Moscow 1905, p. 201-204.

rules", Koshansky wrote on one of the very first pages of his *Obshchaya Ritorika*, "do not write too hastily, learn first to think and feel, the fullness of thoughts and feelings will then find a way to express itself, and perhaps a better way than you might think". "It is said that geniuses do not need rules, ... but do not forget that at first the cedar stood on the same level as the grass and that it warms itself in the same sun and is nourished by the same dew". "The endeavours of pupils should not cool off through admonishment, rather they should be warmed through the involvement of the teacher-and-friend, who always says what is good *beforehand* and *afterwards* explains what should be done differently and how it should be done differently". This all sounds very well, but in practice Koshansky took things a little too far: in the first year writing exercises were altogether prohibited, and when finally it was allowed (first carefully in prose), the boys had to use the kind of stereotype periods which the *Obshchaya Ritorika* ranks under the heading "basic prose". Koshansky followed the example of Aristarchus of Samothrace, the learned authority on classical literature working in Alexandria around 150 B.C., who is mentioned in Cicero and Horace as the *non plus ultra* of expert criticism (and who died of voluntary starvation in 143 B.C.). In Koshansky he is called "an exalted and delicate mind with a refined taste".<sup>48</sup> Koshansky promptly received a poem from Pushkin: "To my Aristarchus", *Moemu Aristarkhu*, a poem which preaches indulgence of the "uninhibited intoxication" of free creation. Koshansky is unmistakably ridiculed as "my melancholy censor", "my persecutor", "my tedious parson", with whom he, Pushkin, was compelled to pass his days "in hours of barren study".

The yield of these studies was not particularly high in terms of reading proficiency in Latin. Although, besides Phaedrus and Nepos, Horace and Virgil were also officially "read", in practice this reading was confined to Koshansky's reading out loud (which he did well). So much can be inferred from contemporary accounts. A school inspector from Moscow seized the opportunity of a visit to St Petersburg to see the celebrated Koshansky in action at the celebrated Lyceum during a Latin class for the senior form: "I had expected to hear our latter-day Romans there. *Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas!* Of the twenty-five pupils, seven read

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<sup>48</sup> N.F. Koshansky, *Chastnaya Ritorika*, St Petersburg 1849<sup>7</sup>, p. 144.

Nepos in a French translation, the others looked with pathetic astonishment at Koshansky, who vainly put himself out to demonstrate the usefulness of Latin". A pupil from the same period writes: "In Latin we were weak. Usually a class with Koshansky (twice a week) would consist of his calling off the names of all twenty-one pupils one by one, after which, one by one, we would call out "I don't understand, professor", and then all of us would get a one".<sup>49</sup> Another pupil, Modest Andreevich, Baron Korf, a classmate of Pushkin, writes in his memoirs of Tsarskoe Selo that although Pushkin enjoyed reading Apuleius, he read him only in a French translation, "because he knew no other modern languages nor the ancient languages". Korf was no friend of Pushkin, but that is no reason to discredit him in this matter.

In matters of poetics Koshansky could teach Pushkin nothing and Koshansky did not teach Pushkin Latin. Greek was never in question. Yet precisely that which he so admired in the Theocritus adaptations of his friend Delvig can be said of Pushkin too: "his idyls are astonishing to me: what an imagination he must have to be able to transport himself from the nineteenth century to the golden age of antiquity, and what an extraordinary sense of beauty to be able to bring Greek poetry to life straight through the heart of an imitation or translation". Indeed, in Mirsky's view, Delvig's *Kupalnitsy* ("Women bathing") is "unquestionably the highest achievement in Russian poetry in the more purely sensuous vision of classical antiquity".<sup>50</sup> And of Pushkin's early poems his toothless uncle Vasily Lvovich, himself a poet and a Gallomaniac who liked to have his hair cut in the Roman fashion and then sprinkle it with *huile antique*, was surprised and relieved to find that "they do not smell of Latin". In the statue park of Tsarskoe Selo Pushkin and Delvig could together drift away in sweet reveries about their classical world, their antiquity, far away from Koshansky. A number of autobiographically coloured passages in *Eugeny Onegin* leads to the same conclusion: the enchantment of the classical world was there, even without the magic wand of knowledge of Greek and Latin. And those who did hold

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<sup>49</sup> The inspector was I.I. Davydov: see *Russky Arkhiv* 1889, No. 12, p. 546; the student was M.A. Belukha-Kokhanovsky: see *Russkaya Starina* 65 (1890), p. 841-842.

<sup>50</sup> Mirsky, p. 81.

the magic wand in their hands were unable to work magic with it....

In September 1815 Zhukovsky visited Pushkin at the Lyceum. He had just read the young talent's first poems and wanted to see him in his own environment. Zhukovsky reacted with alarm in a letter to Vyazemsky: "I fear the worst for him in that deadly Lyceum—how poorly they teach there! If knowledge is badly presented, it loses its enchantment for a young and enthusiastic mind which finds it far more enjoyable to be creative itself than to work hard and collect material for a solid building. It will ruin him. I wish I could send him to Gottingen for three or four years". But Pushkin got along and was not ruined. His Christmas report suggests that he no longer worked on his Latin at all. He dreamt of a splendid career as an officer, but for military science he likewise failed to do anything. Half a year later he took his final examination: literature (Russian and French) and fencing were excellent, Latin and economics good, the rest earned a pass. The fact that Pushkin was so proficient at economics has failed to be noticed in the more than 150 years since his death. His knowledge of Latin was given the same mark as his economics.... He had never been troubled by a wish to study in Gottingen. "It would not be bad to lock him up in Gottingen and to put him on a diet of milk, soup, and logic there for three years", Batyushkov had also written—three years after Zhukovsky—in a letter to Aleksandr Turgenev, an alumnus of Gottingen. Pushkin himself gently mocked the culture of Gottingen, in *Eugeny Onegin* (II 6) the alma mater of Vladimir Lensky.<sup>51</sup>

It is a favourite pastime of "Pushkinologists" to puzzle over the real life identity of characters in Pushkin's poems, especially in *Eugeny Onegin*. Nabokov in his commentary has voiced exasperation at this confusion of "the reality of art and the unreality of history": "The whole trouble is that memoirists and historians (no matter how honest they are) are either artists who fantastically re-create observed life or mediocrities (the frequent case) who unconsciously distort the factual by bringing it into contact with their commonplace and simple mind. At best we can form our own judgement of a historical person if we possess what that

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<sup>51</sup> Magarshack, p. 44-45; Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 2, p. 228-229.

person wrote himself—especially in the way of letters, a journal, an autobiography, and so forth”.<sup>52</sup> With all respect for Nabokov, one may perhaps add that fiction is rarely altogether fiction: people, even the poets among them, do not have quite enough imagination for that, despite their laudable attempts to leave themselves and their world behind them. *Eugeny Onegin* belongs to the domain of the “reality of art”, but it is a “*reality* of art”, it is “*observed life* re-created”, as good historiography is. There is a relation with the “reality of history”. In actual fact Nabokov himself took part in the guessing game with keenness and great inventiveness whenever he could, despite his well-known depreciatory asides directed at Clio, “the hysterical Muse of history”. In other words: there is little reason to leave out of consideration what we find in the way of remarks about antiquity and education in antiquity in *Eugeny Onegin* or any other purely fictional work just because we are dealing with fiction, and there is no reason whatsoever to do so if these remarks are in keeping with what we have in the way of non-fictional historical information on these matters from letters and the like.

Take *Eugeny Onegin* I 6 (in the translation by Sir Charles Johnston in the Penguin Classics):

Now Latin's gone quite out of favour;  
yet, truthfully and not to chaff,  
Onegin knew enough to savour  
the meaning of an epigraph,  
make Juvenal his text, or better  
add *vale* when he signed a letter;  
stumblingly call to mind he did  
two verses of the Aeneid.

Onegin is not at all interested in history (unlike Pushkin!), but he does build up a collection of anecdotes ranging from Romulus to his own time.

And also I 7:

He was without that dithyrambic  
frenzy which wrecks our lives for sound,  
and telling trochee from iambic  
was quite beyond his wit, we found.  
He cursed Theocritus and Homer,  
in Adam Smith was his diploma.

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<sup>52</sup> Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 3, p. 177.

For all the irony in this fragment, we know that Pushkin had just enough Latin to add *vale* at the end of a letter and on occasion did so. Juvenal he knew only in translation, and of Virgil he could in fact quote only a few lines. Homer he knew only in a bad translation, and he will have heard of Theocritus from Batyushkov and Koshansky, who, as I noted before, translated Theocritus (unfortunately without ever publishing this translation, so that we do not know whether Koshansky followed the common nineteenth-century practice of manipulating Theocritus' text in such a way as to eliminate the homosexual orientation of his erotic poetry). In the manuscript variants mentioned by Nabokov in his commentary, it is hinted that Onegin was incapable of reading Tacitus, Livy, or even Phaedrus, that he was unable to decline simple words like *aquila* and *tabula*, and that he could quote no more than three lines of Catullus.<sup>53</sup> All this has a strong autobiographical flavour.

Certainly the first stanza of chapter 8 is autobiographical. The translation is again that of Sir Charles Johnston:

Days when I came to flower serenely  
in Lycée gardens long ago,  
and read my Apuleius keenly,  
but spared no glance for Cicero;  
yes, in that spring-time, in low-lying  
secluded vales, where swans were crying,  
by waters that were still and clear,  
for the first time the Muse came near.  
And suddenly her radiance lighted  
my student cell: she opened up  
the joys of youth, that festal cup ...

"Apuleius I read secretly, and Virgil made me yawn", reads one of Pushkin's rejected variants, where it is also said that he was nicknamed "the Frenchman".<sup>54</sup> As for Cicero, when Pushkin, during his enforced stay in Odessa in 1823, once walked into a school, he found a pupil in the reading room who had asked for special permission to read one of Cicero's speeches there alone, but in actual fact was defying all the rules by copying *Ruslan i Lyudmila* and hastily concealed the book when he heard Pushkin (whom he did not know) enter ... "Do not remain seated under

<sup>53</sup> Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 2, p. 53.

<sup>54</sup> Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 3, p. 132.

the lectern, lulled to sleep by Latin", Pushkin had already exhorted his friend Delvig in 1814 (in *Piruyushchie studenty*, third stanza). Latin as a language interested him even less: "Never mind the grey professor from Gottingen, when, bent over his old lectern, he turns his profound thoughts to Latin" (in the poem *Krasivitse, kotoraya nyukhala tabak*—"The beauty who took snuff"—from 1814). Finally, stanza VII 55, which immediately precedes the autobiographical stanzas of VIII and where Pushkin himself gives a quite unequivocal answer to the question of his relation to *klassitsizm*:

Dovolno. S plech doloi obuza!  
Ya klassitsizmu ot dal chest:  
khot pozdno, a vstuplenie est.

Enough. The load is off my shoulder!  
I've paid my due to classic art:  
it may be late, but it's a start.

As long as Pushkin still paid tribute to *klassitsizm*, he did so not only for the enchantment of classical motifs and poetic perfection in expression. There is a fundamental difference between Pushkin and naive and apolitical epicures like Batyushkov and Delvig. Zhukovsky and his contemporaries were staunch conservatives in political matters, defenders of autocracy. Pushkin felt more at home with the restless, Aleksandr and Nikolai and Sergei Turgenev for instance. His *klassitsizm* is not only concerned with classical poetry or antiquity in itself, it is concerned with antiquity as the dream world in which people could be themselves in simplicity, truth, and above all freedom, in an all-embracing existential freedom. This "classicism" was never abjured by Pushkin.

In 1826, soon after the execution and banishment of the Decembrists, Pushkin republished some poems which had been brought out separately before. In this republication the poem *To Licinius* comes first, not because it is the earliest poem, which it is not, but because of its unambiguous political thrust—"political" in the broadest sense, since specific political statements are lacking. The tone is what matters: "In my heart I am a Roman. Freedom seethes in my breast; the spirit of a great people does not smoulder in me". The poem was written in 1815, by a sixteen-year-old boy who still walked around in his lyceum uniform, white trousers, white waistcoat, white tie, blue jacket, red collar, silver tabs, and

three-cornered hat. In the *editio princeps* of 1815 the words "after the Latin" have been added. In all later editions they have been left out.

It did not take long for someone to point out that the poem's main source is Juvenal's satires, especially his third satire. Juvenal is in fact mentioned on one occasion in the poem and the way that Pushkin transcribed Juvenal's name there proves yet again that he knew Juvenal only via a French translation. Juvenal and Pushkin, especially the later Pushkin, have one thing in common: "must I always be forced to listen to these poets, who with hoarse voice and ranting speeches torment me with their stories about Theseus and Telephus, Orestes and Jason *e tutti quanti, semper ego auditor tantum?*" Thus Juvenal's first satire begins, and his answer is just what we would expect: I will sing my own tune; I do not need to sing the praises of all those ancient heroes. All I have to do is look around me: the subjects are there for the taking, everything that people do, their promises and fears, their angers and their joys, all this will be the theme of my poetry. *Et quando uberior vitiorum copia*, and when did vices come in greater abundance?" G.G. Ramsay has drawn a felicitous comparison: "Just as Socrates is said to have called down the attention of men from the heavens to the earth, so did Juvenal call men from the barren repetition of mythological tales and fancies, and the no less barren field of rhetorical declamation, to describing the life of men as lived in their own time and city".<sup>55</sup>

In *To Licinius* Pushkin does not yet elect to describe his own time and city. The poem is about Rome, which has bowed its proud neck under the yoke of a despotic emperor whose favourite bends an indolent senate to his capricious will. It is an enslaved Rome, where scheming is proclaimed supreme virtue and all men cringe before the arrogance of power. The poem is in fact strongly reminiscent of Juvenal, but there is no point in searching for parallel passages or calling it an adaptation of one particular satire by Juvenal. There is a superficial similarity to Juvenal's third satire, but apart from the fact that the contrast between the corruption of the city and the innocence of the country plays a role in both poems, the similarity is only superficial: both

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<sup>55</sup> Juvenal and Persius, with an English translation by G.G. Ramsay, London 1979, p. xlix.



introduce a character who can no longer endure to see the general decline around him and decides to turn his back on the city and take up residence in the country. "I am leaving Rome for good, I hate slavery", writes Pushkin. In Pushkin's poem, unlike Juvenal's, this decision is prompted only by bitterness about the servile obedience of the Romans, especially the distinguished Romans. "Would we not do well to follow this example and turn our backs on the city too? Or is it better to bow one's head humbly to fate and learn the role of grey-haired cynic?" This is what the poet asks Licinius in Pushkin's poem. Licinius does not answer. In the final twelve lines the poet sketches a dark vision of the future. The day of vengeance will come: "I foresee the fall of the fearsome great power, the crown of the world will return to dust". Rome will be brought down, and the traveller, meditating on the spectacle of the ruins of the once magnificent palaces, will be assured of one thing: "Rome rose in freedom, it perished in slavery". Thus ends *To Licinius*.

Now how should we interpret the addition "after the Latin"? The poem is *not* "after the Latin"; it is not a translation, nor a case of *imitatio* alone; it is above all a case of *aemulatio*, and in such cases the poet by definition adds something essential and something of his own to the example. "After the Latin" is therefore an addition which is designed to camouflage this essentially new element. Pushkin was not merely joking, as it was sometimes claimed in the nineteenth century; he was defending himself in advance against censorship. Criticism of a "despot's favourite", criticism of the phenomenon of "slavery" could easily be explained as criticism of the *status quo*. There is a striking parallel: when Kondraty Fyodorovich Ryleev—one of those hanged on 13 July 1826—wrote a satire on General Arakcheev in 1820, he also tricked it up in ancient dress and moreover added a postscript: "Imitation of Persius' satire *To Rubellius*". But the name Rubellius does not occur in Persius' work at all. That Pushkin himself in 1826 read *To Licinius* as an expression of contemporary criticism seems unmistakable in view of the poem's prominent position in his volume from that year.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. Malein's commentary on *Litsiniyu* in Pushkin, *Sochineniya*, izd. Vengerov, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1907, p. 212-214; for the connection between this poem and Mickiewicz see W. Lednicki, *Pushkin's Bronze Horseman. The Story of a Masterpiece*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1955, p. 28-30.

In 1817 Pushkin wrote what Nabokov holds to be his first great poem: *Volnost* ("Freedom"). We already encountered the same title as the title of a poem by Radishchev from 1783, which owed its conception to the American War of Independence. Pushkin's poem has 96 lines, of which 32 (lines 57-88) allude to the "tyrannicide" of Emperor Paul I, the father of Alexander I, in the night of 11 March 1801. It is the first poem with which Pushkin attracted the attention of the authorities. Underlying the poem, one of them wrote, are the dangerous ideas proceeding from "the current school, or the current system, of anarchy, a system which is inaccurately described as the system of human rights, freedom, and independence of nations". Mikhail Bestuzhev-Ryumin would later explicitly call Pushkin's ode to freedom one of the sources of inspiration of the Decembrists. He too was hanged on 13 July 1826.<sup>57</sup>

The poem was written, or at least conceived, in the room of Nikolai Turgenev, which like Aleksei Olenin's salon was located on the Fontanka, opposite the Mikhailovsky Palace for which the assassins of the emperor had set out that very same night on their way to his bedroom. No mythology, no antiquity, apart from three incidental names: Cythera, Clio, Caligula. "Begone out of my sight, goddess of love, I wish to sing the song of freedom and drive the tyrant from his throne". In Nabokov's translation:<sup>58</sup>

Nurslings of fickle Destiny,  
you, tyrants of the world, shudder!  
and you take heart and hearken,  
resuscitate, you fallen slaves!

To what should they hearken? To the story of the assassination of a tyrant, Emperor Paul, who is not mentioned by name. This story begins as follows:

Autocratic Villain!  
You, your throne, I abhor;  
your downfall, the death of your children,  
I see with cruel jubilation.

These lines would be particularly remembered on and immediately after 16 July 1918, the day the last emperor, Nicholas II, and his children would be murdered. But what was the moral for

<sup>57</sup> Magarshack, p. 82-83; Simmons, p. 245.

<sup>58</sup> Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 3, p. 338-340.

Pushkin? Not to have the *Demos* on the throne, but, to put it in classical Greek, the *Nomos Basileus*:

...grief, grief to the nations  
where rashly it [i.e. the Law] is drowsing,  
where either the People or Kings  
to dominate the Law are able!

When are rulers safe? The answer:

Be you the first to bow your heads  
beneath the Law's trustworthy shelter,  
and guard eternally the throne  
shall liberty and peace of Peoples.

Freedom and peace under the almighty rule of the Law. An idea which is already prominent in the poetry of Solon and Pindar: *Nomos Basileus*. In Hesiod Dike, Eunomia, and Eirene appear as daughters of Themis. The dialogue on freedom and democracy between Theseus and Creon's messenger in Euripides' "The Suppliants" (ll. 399-462) is familiar enough, and the fate of the Decembrists confirmed yet again what was said there (in A.S. Way's translation in the Loeb Classical Library):

How can a state be established then in strength,  
when, even as sweeps the scythe o'er springtide mead,  
One lops the brave young hearts like flower-blooms?

The clearest parallels date from the Roman Imperial Age: the praise which Tacitus and Pliny the Younger bestowed on an emperor who had succeeded in harmonizing *principatus* and *libertas*, and Dio Chrysostom's first speech "On Kingship", where Basileia, daughter of Zeus and the personification of kingship, appears in the company of Dike, justice, Eunomia, just rule, and Eirene, peace. There is another person in this company: "he who stands near Royalty, just beside the sceptre and somewhat in front of it, a strong man, grey-haired and proud, has the name of Law; he has also been called Right Reason, Counsellor, Coadjutor, without whom these women are not permitted to take any action or even to purpose one".<sup>59</sup>

Pushkin is not likely to have known this speech by Dio Chrysostom. Nevertheless, the similarity is evident: both authors are concerned, not with praising freedom as democratic freedom

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<sup>59</sup> Dio Chrysostom, *Oratio* 1, 74, translated by J.W. Cohoon in the Loeb Classical Library.

or with praising the republican form of government, but with praising the ideal of the enlightened monarch, an ideal for which Dio Chrysostom was also banished by his emperor, Domitian.<sup>60</sup>

In 1821 *Kinzhalt*, "The dagger", 57 lines: a frankly revolutionary poem glorifying tyrannicide. It was written after a German student had attempted to murder the reactionary playwright August von Kotzebue and of course refers extensively to the classic example *par excellence* Julius Caesar and Brutus. The poem circulated only in handwritten copies; it was not printed until 1827, in a French translation.

In paraphrase: "Dagger, the god of Lemnos (i.e. Hephaestus) forged you for the immortal Nemesis. When Zeus' thunder is silent, when the sword of the law fails to do its work, you are our hope. You lie hidden in the shadow of the throne, under the splendour of festive robes. Like a ray from the underworld, like the lightning of the gods, you glitter harshly in the eyes of the malefactor. He looks around and shivers during his banquets. Your unexpected thrust can find him everywhere. Sovereign Rome lay prostrate, the law had bowed its head, the Rubicon murmured gently under Caesar, but freedom-loving Brutus rose up and thanks to you he could do his work", etc.

After the execution of the Decembrists, the new emperor, Nicholas I, had invited Pushkin write down his ideas on education. Presumably it was an attempt by the authorities to test Pushkin's loyalty. "That a small number of young people indulges in extremist fantasies cannot be blamed on education. Rather it is a consequence of spiritual idleness". This, or words to this effect, had been written by Nicholas himself in his manifesto of 13 July 1826. The nobility, it further said, was to shield itself from foreign influences and to concentrate on the national virtues. In his report Pushkin took this manifesto as his point of departure and here and there even endorsed it. It is interesting to see what he writes about his ideal of education in history in senior forms: "one will be able to draw attention impartially to the differences in disposition between the nations, one will not be able to resort to subterfuges, one will not be able to distort the republican mentality, one will

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<sup>60</sup> M.I. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, Oxford 1957<sup>2</sup>, p. 114-116 and 119-121.

not be able to misrepresent the murder of Caesar, already for two thousand years a glorious event, one will be able to present Brutus as the defender of the traditions of his native country and Caesar as an arrogant subverter of order. Generally speaking, there is no point in concealing republican ideas from the pupils, so that these catch them unawares and attract them through their novelty when they make their entrance into the world".<sup>61</sup> Nicholas was furious.

Pushkin had once heard the ancient story about the legendary bard—"inventor" of the dithyramb—Arion of Lesbos. According to this story, Arion, after a successful tour of Sicily and the South of France, had embarked on a Corinthian ship heavily laden with his riches, which was to take him to Corinth. Tempted by the sight of his precious luggage, the crew decided to kill him and divide the luggage as booty. As a farewell to life, Arion was allowed to sing his song one last time in full regalia on deck. This he did, and then jumped overboard. Instead of drowning, he was picked up with lyre and all by a musically sensitive dolphin, which brought him safely ashore in Corinth. How the malefactors were subsequently exposed need not be considered here. The benefactor, the dolphin, and the bard's lyre were given a place among the stars.

In 1827 Pushkin wrote his poem *Arion*, in fifteen iambic tetrameters. The poem was immediately recognized as an allegory of the ill-fated Decembrist conspiracy and Pushkin's emotional involvement in it. The story is quite different from the ancient legend. The name Arion occurs only in the title, there is no dolphin, and the ship is not a ship of malefactors but the richly laden ship of a crew which is diligently and competently working the sails and the oars and the helm to ensure a safe voyage, "and I, full of carefree trust, I sing for them my song". I: Arion-Pushkin. Suddenly a storm blows up and the ship and the crew disappear into the waves. "Only I, the mysterious bard, cast ashore by the storm, I still sing my song, and I lay my clothes out to dry in the sun, under a rock". It is a sublime poem, with the subdued detachment of a Greek stele.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> "O narodnom vospitanii", A.S. Pushkin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, izd. AN SSSR, vol. 11, 1949, p. 43-47.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. the fine remark by John Bayley, p. 147 n.1, on Pushkin's use of the Churchslavonic word *riza*, being primarily a sacerdotal vestment: "the

In December 1834 Pushkin's *History of Pugachev* was published, part text and part source material. For the latter Pushkin had received permission to do research in the archives of the Ministry of War. A book on such a subject could not but be viewed with suspicion by the censor. Once published, it proved a failure: no one bought it and the press reviews were negative. Sergei Uvarov, Minister of Education for one year and President of the Academy of Sciences for more than fifteen years, thought it a subversive book and was confirmed in his opinion by Prince Mikhail Aleksandrovich Dondukov-Korsakov, whom he had newly appointed as Vice-President of the Academy and Chairman of the Supreme Committee for Censorship and whose name Pushkin usually shortened to *Duduk* ("dunce"). In his exasperation Pushkin threw caution to the wind: he wrote an epigram which openly alludes to the rumour (not invented by Pushkin) that Dondukov-Korsakov owed his appointment in the Academy of Sciences to his homosexual relationship with Uvarov.<sup>63</sup>

In about the same period he wrote a poem which through the addition *podrazhanie latinskomu*, "imitation after the Latin", belongs to the same category as his early poem *To Licinius*. Although the classical sounding title of this poem, *Na vyzdorovlenie Lukullu*, "The recovery of Lucullus" is once again suggestive of Roman satire, it was clear to everyone that Pushkin was out to harm Uvarov. In this he was highly successful. The devastating allusions to Uvarov's avarice were so detailed as to render any camouflage quite ineffective, although they deceived the censor, who released the poem for publication without reading it. A Belgian professor of Greek and Latin in the University of Kazan was kind enough to translate the poem into French at once. He himself had a bone to pick with Uvarov. He sent his translation to Uvarov. "I ask you to consider publishing my work under your own name. You are, after all, in the habit of doing so", he had written in his accompanying letter. The name of this professor was Alphonse Jean Jobard. He was asked to pack his bags and leave Russia the very same year.<sup>64</sup>

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application to the poet, as the priest of Apollo, is obvious".

<sup>63</sup> H. Troyat, *Pouchkine*, Paris 1946, vol. 2, p. 297 is far from sceptic: "... Doundoukov, arriviste et pédéraste notoire, qui avait été autrefois en liaison amoureuse avec Ouarov ...".

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Shaw, p. 788.

Pushkin would not be forgotten by Uvarov either. The day of reckoning was close at hand.

On 18 February 1831 Pushkin had married Natalya Nikolaevna Goncharova. He thought her the most beautiful woman in St Petersburg and so did others. *Incessu dea patebat!* "Her classical figure reminded me of the Euterpe in the Louvre", one observer wrote in 1835.<sup>65</sup> Natalya Pushkina-Goncharova became the central character in an complicated web of intrigues, in which Uvarov, as Pushkin was fully convinced, also played a dark role and which reached its low point on the dark afternoon of 27 January 1837 near the Black Water somewhere outside St Petersburg. Pushkin was shot down in his duel with Georges d'Anthès, the French adopted son or foster son—it is not quite clear which—of the Dutch ambassador in St Petersburg, Baron van Heeckeren. Pushkin suspected d'Anthès of having an affair with his wife and so had honourably challenged him. Perhaps he should have challenged the emperor himself—this is not quite clear either. Two days later he died of his injury. There was a hasty funeral ceremony in a remote church. The people were not allowed to know, but they came in droves. Afterwards the mortal remains were brought to their last resting-place, to the tomb where less than a year ago his mother—an eternal stranger to him—had been buried. It was somewhere deep in the country, on 5 February 1837.

### *Exegi monumentum*

From 1815, the same year in which he wrote *To Licinius* with its glorification of the country, dates *Poslanie k Yudinu*, "Letter to Yudin" (another schoolmate). In this poem, 227 lines long, Pushkin gives a description of his life on the estate of his grandmother near the village of Zakharovo, not far from Moscow. The country house with its two wings was on a hill, surrounded by many trees and flowers. At the foot of the hill there was a large pond, and across the pond low pine-trees, crowded together. Over the pine-trees, in the distance, the village could be seen. "My Zakharovo, it is reflected, with its fences, its bridge over the rippling river, its shady thickets, in the water's mirror. My house lies on a hill.

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<sup>65</sup> Simmons, p. 373.

From the veranda I can walk down into the merry garden, where Flora and Pomona together offer me their flowers and fruit, where a dark row of old maples reaches into the sky and the poplars gently rustle. Thither I hasten as soon as the day begins, with a simple spade in my hands. I walk along a winding path in the meadow, I water the tulips and the roses, and I feel happy during my work in the early morning. There, under the overhanging oak, with my Horace, I lose myself in pleasant dreams. Nearby a brook rolls and gurgles between its sodden banks. Disgruntled, it hides its glittering stream in the neighbouring groves and meadows. But now it is already noon. In the bright dining-room the round table has been festively set. Bread and salt (a sign of hospitality, MAW) are on the clean tablecloth, the cabbage soup is steaming, the glasses are filled with wine, and a pike is ready to be served. The neighbours come in, a boisterous company. They break the silence. They sit down. We listen to the tinkling of the glasses. They all praise Bacchus and Pomona and with them the beautiful spring..." (ll. 43-75).

Horace and cabbage soup. In *Eugeny Onegin* VI 4 a certain Zaretsky appears on the scene. He is Lensky's next-door neighbour in the country. Zaretsky used to be a merry chap, who liked to play jokes on others. But now the times have changed, he has become wiser and sadder, VI 7 (again in the translation by Sir Charles Johnston):

sed alia tempora! The devil  
(like passion's dream, that other revel)  
goes out of us when youth is dead.  
So my Zaretsky, as I said,  
beneath bird-cherries and acacias  
has found a port for his old age,  
and lives, a veritable sage,  
for planting cabbage, like Horatius,  
and breeding ducks and geese as well,  
and teaching children how to spell.

Planting cabbage, *planter ses choux*, is an expression for "living in the country". "But quite apart from this, Horace did have a green thumb"—see also the motto at the beginning of *Eugeny Onegin* II: *O rus*.<sup>66</sup> These are the opening words of a famous passage from a famous satire by Horace: *O rus, quando ego te aspiciam*. "Oh country-

<sup>66</sup> Horace, *Satires* ii 6, 60: cf. Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 3, p. 15.



side, when shall I see thee, and when shall I be free to read in the books of the ancients or slumber in *dolce far niente*, blissfully oblivious of life's cares, and when will my favourite cabbage, juicy through the fatty bacon, stand on the table before me again?"

The countryside is the land of freedom. Pushkin is the poet of freedom. On 21 August 1836, trapped in the network of intrigues surrounding his Natalya, he writes his poetic testament. The title is after the Latin, but this time there is no camouflage: *Exegi monumentum*, Horace's *Carmen* III 30.<sup>67</sup> Pushkin was familiar with Derzhavin's adaptation of this poem. In it Horace proudly and self-confidently prophesies how he will live on in fame through his poetry as long as the *pontifex* will climb up to the Capitol. Horace bases his claim to fame purely on his *ars poetica*, on his achievement of being the first poet to succeed in modulating the Greek elegy into Latin verses. Fame and belief in one's own eternal fame constitute the dominant element in Horace's poem. It is a very Roman poem. Derzhavin transformed it into a very Russian poem: the Mediterranean setting—Libitina, the Capitol, the Aufidus, Daunus, Delphi—has been replaced by a Russian setting—the White Sea, the Black Sea, the Neva, the Don, the Volga, the Ural. In Derzhavin the claim to fame no longer rests solely on his *ars poetica*, on his achievement of being the first poet to succeed in modulating the Latin *carmen* into Russian verses. Derzhavin prides himself on being the first to have sung the praises of his sovereign, Catherine, in the ancient Russian style.

Pushkin's poem is neither Roman nor Russian. Pushkin does not pride himself on his *ars poetica*, nor does he pride himself on his readiness to serve the powers of the world. He prides himself on being the poet of freedom:

In centuries to come I shall be loved by the people  
For having awakened noble thoughts with my lyre,  
For having glorified freedom in my harsh age  
And called for mercy towards the fallen.

Alexander Pushkin—"small Latin and no Greek"—*aere perennius*.

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<sup>67</sup> Derzhavin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1895, p. 206-207. Nabokov has translated both poems: Pushkin *EO* Nabokov, vol. 2, p. 310-311.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### INTERLUDE: THE FRAME OF REFERENCE

Unlike Western Europe, Russia never had a Renaissance and a Reformation. Thus there was never any question in Russia of a *rediscovery* of classical antiquity. Antiquity was *discovered*. The discoverers incorporated their discovery into the frame of reference of their own time. They discovered what fitted into the frame. What did not fit into the frame was not discovered. This frame was in the first place the frame of autocracy. In the second place it was the frame of Russia's orientation to the West and its desire to link up with the West without losing its own identity.

During the reign of Peter the Great these two dimensions were harmonically and hermetically conjoined in the conception of Peter as a Roman *Imperator* to whom his subjects owed absolute obedience. This conception, as we saw, was the result of Prokopovich's explorations of antiquity, particularly as it had manifested itself to him during his sojourn in Rome. "We want to show that the time is past when we could be regarded as barbarians who feel only contempt for intellectual activity and science." The quotation dates from 1721. It is important to bear in mind that this element in the conception of Peter the Great and his age as the beginning of the new age and of a new Russia also formed an essential part of the view which many classicists of the nineteenth century took of their country and its history and of their place in the service of power. According to the image they had of themselves, they too belonged to the servants of sovereign and country, the *noblesse de service* which Peter had envisaged when he introduced the Table of Ranks in 1722.

It was only in the time of Catherine the Great and Alexander I that antiquity could gain a firm foothold in Russia. It was the antiquity of enlightened monarchy, an antiquity which was permitted to function as a mind-expanding element in the processes of human imagination, in architecture, in sculpture, in literature, as long as the expanding effect did not exceed the frame of autocracy. St Petersburg became a new Rome, *Roma Renata et Renovata*,

and Catherine became *Minerva Triumphans*. But Skovoroda failed to see his work published and Aleksandr Radishchev was banished to Siberia. Falconet had his own criticism of classicism and the representatives of the established order and used his own standards to judge artistic quality, but he was politically harmless. Mickiewicz was not harmless, being a Pole. His antiquity is the idealized antiquity of the generation of 1789.

For a short while it seemed as if, despite oppression, this antiquity might make its influence felt in Russia, when so many young Russians returned full of enthusiasm and energy from their sojourns in Western Europe. But this was an illusion. Even in Western Europe this view of antiquity could not hold out for long. It was pulverized in the mills of science. For these young Russians from around 1800 the most important of these mills was in Gottingen. But it is also true of Christian Gottlob Heyne in Gottingen that he only discovered that antiquity which fitted into his frame. In his case the frame is that of the ascendant bourgeoisie: utopian in Karl Mannheim's definition, aiming at modernization and change, opposed to a society where birth and wealth were the factors which determined one's place, hoping for recognition on the basis of personal merit. "Culture can only thrive in a climate of political freedom": the title of Heyne's inaugural lecture was at the same time a credo. Heyne's ideal of freedom had its limits. The more radical thinkers argued that there was no freedom without equality. This went too far for Heyne. The more the ascendant bourgeoisie in Western Europe became an ascended bourgeoisie in the course of the nineteenth century and saw its ideal of freedom realized, the more the utopian element became an ideological factor. This did not fail to have an effect on the bourgeoisie's image of antiquity and on the questions which were asked and not asked in the scientific study of antiquity.

Russia did not have a broad echelon of independent citizens. In Russia everyone served. It was a kind of society that can be compared to a pyramid. At the apex of the pyramid is the emperor. By virtue of his position on top he can only look down on all other members of society. These other members occupy positions on the edges and side surfaces of the pyramid and inside it. Thus they are all (more or less) unequal to the man at the top. They are equal to one another only insofar as they are equidistant from the

top. In so far as they are not (and this applies to the majority), there is inequality among them. In such a model there is no place for the notion of freedom in the sense of autonomy, let alone in the sense of sovereign participation in decision-making.

Does this mean that there is no difference between enlightened monarchy and absolute autocracy? One is reminded here of the distinction which is usually made in the periodization of the Roman Imperial Age between Principate (roughly the first two centuries A.D.) and Dominate (late antiquity, roughly from the emperors Diocletian and Constantine the Great). In the latter case the Principate as a form or style of government is often associated with enlightened monarchy, the "enlightenment" consisting in the degree of participation which the monarch allows to people and groups more or less close to him. The Dominate as a form of government is often associated with terms such as absolutism and the despotic state.

On the level of human intercourse the opposition Principate-Dominate corresponds to the opposition *princeps-dominus*. A *dominus* is by definition the leader and man at the head of the *domus*. A *domus* is by definition a pyramidal social organization. By contrast, the term *princeps* is associated with a *primus inter pares*, a "first among equals". A society in which a "first" stands at the top while at the same time he has recognized "equals" is by definition non-pyramidal. A different model is involved here. This different type of society is comparable to a truncated pyramid. It does not have an individual at the top, but a group (the "equals" with their "first") on a top surface which arrives at joint decisions via some kind of joint consultation. In this consultation the word of the *princeps* does not have the force of a decree, for if it had, he would not longer be *primus inter pares*, but *dominus*.

If one focuses on the real balance of power and refuses to be misled by apparent conditions, it is clear that Roman society during the Principate does *not* correspond to the model of the truncated pyramid. In other words: the term Principate is a misnomer, since all power rested with the emperor in Rome, no matter how hard he tried to disguise this with a view to public relations (especially relations with the upper crust, the senatorial aristocracy).

The same is true of the Russian emperorship: no matter how Catherine the Great and Alexander I pretended (and actually

believed themselves) to be "enlightened" and were prepared to consult with people in their environment, whom they appeared to approach on an equal basis, in actual fact they had absolute power and thus the final say in any matter. Sure enough, Catherine could amicably remark to Falconet that he need not bother to speak to her in the polite and long-winded formulas typical of courtiers and servants ("n'employez aucune formalité, ... n'allongez point des lignes par des épithètes dont je me ne soucie pas"), but the fact is that Catherine was the supreme ruler, that she could always disregard any suggestion, any proposal, no matter whose. The fact that she or Alexander I or whatever enlightened monarch did not do so in a number of cases, or perhaps even in the majority of cases, does not alter this in any way. The point is that apart from the monarch no one could ever act by virtue of their own sovereign authority or by virtue of a power higher than the monarch (for instance, the law), that in principle everyone could only act *vice regens*, that is to say, as a deputy, and everyone could always be called to order, the hierarchical order of the non-truncated pyramid, by the person for whom he was acting as a deputy. In the court in St Petersburg, too, the *pares* were always in the position of an official, minister, servant of the *princeps*, and thus in a position of inequality. To put it differently: the *pares* were not really *pares*, and so the *princeps* was not really a *princeps*, but a *dominus*. The enlightened monarchies of Catherine the Great and Alexander I and of all the other Romanovs up to and including Nicholas II likewise correspond to the model of the pyramid.

The man (or, in Catherine's case, the woman) at the top of the pyramid can also be described by the Latin term *patronus*, patron. The collective of his protégés, his *clientes*, can be described by the term *clientela*. All that servants ask of their master is that he behave like a good master, like a good shepherd, like a benevolent *patronus* who knows the needs of his *clientela*, shares their concerns, and meets their wishes, so that there is in fact an optimal relationship based on mutual trust, an optimal *fides* as required in the intercourse between *patronus* and *cliens*. One could say that a monarchy is enlightened if this *fides* is optimal.

Considered more closely, the pyramid of the kind of society to which the Russian empire belongs consists of a body of smaller pyramids built into the large pyramid, as it were. Each of these pyramids is also supervised by a *dominus* or *patronus*. However, the

fact that these are built-in pyramids implies that these *domini* or *patroni*, each with his own *clientela*, are at the same time in the position of a *cliens*, since they are the *clientela* of the *patronus*, or *Patronus*, of the large pyramid.

In the Russia of Catherine the Great and Alexander I this double position can generally be recognized as pertaining to the heads of the leading families of the aristocratic elite. Specifically applied to what was described in the previous two chapters, it is not hard to recognize this double position in the cases of Mikhail Muraviev, Aleksei Olenin, and Sergei Uvarov. With one another they associated on an equal footing. With regard to the emperor they were unequal and, because all three were in his employment, dependent. This dependence fostered submissive behaviour, as is strikingly illustrated in Olenin's case: as soon as he noticed that the emperor was interested in Ozerov's *Oedipus*, he took steps to further its cause. At the same time they had their own *clientela*, within which the various *clientes* in turn associated with one another on an equal footing. The fact that Muraviev, Olenin, and Uvarov not only regarded each other as equals, but also as kindred spirits and friends, helped to blur the dividing lines between their *clientelae*. A *cliens* of one could at once be a *cliens* of one of the other two or of both.

Thus the many names which we encountered in the previous chapters can be arranged in a fairly simple scheme. In this scheme Muraviev, Olenin, and Uvarov are located high up in the large pyramid. They were directly in touch with Catherine and/or Alexander. The limits, but also the possibilities, of their "freedom" of action were directly determined by the monarch. These possibilities included that of guiding the monarch, just as Potemkin could guide Catherine and Speransky Alexander, but they could do so only to the extent that the monarch allowed. With regard to the introduction of ancient culture as a source of inspiration and example for the native culture, one is thus led to conclude that this process would have taken an entirely different course without the involvement of Catherine, with her orientation to Western Europe and in particular her admiration for France. She appointed Muraviev as the teacher of Alexander I, she was responsible for Muraviev's interest in Gottingen, she sent Olenin to Dresden, she was Uvarov's godmother.

Muraviev's *clientela* or network included Matthaiei, Timkovsky, Buhle, Koshansky, Batyushkov, and Gnedich. That of Olenin included Batyushkov, Ozerov, and Gnedich. That of Uvarov included Batyushkov, Gnedich, Belin de Ballu, and Graefe.<sup>1</sup> It goes without saying that these names represent only part of the total *clientela* of the three men. I have listed here only the key figures among those who were enthusiastic about classical antiquity in Russia around 1800. Of those mentioned in the previous chapter, Nikolai Radishchev and Martynov can also be grouped in Muraviev's network, although Martynov was in the first place a *cliens* of Speransky. The nature of the relationship between *patronus* and *cliens* was not equally intensive in all cases: Gnedich, for instance, was probably helped at the beginning of his career by Muraviev, and he was later strongly supported by Olenin, but it was above all at Uvarov's prompting that he switched to the hexameter for his translation of the *Iliad*. In some cases there was in turn a *patronus-clientes* relationship among the *clientes* in the form of a teacher-pupil relationship: Matthaiei was Timkovsky's teacher, Buhle Koshansky's, Koshansky Batyushkov's.

Why is Pushkin's name absent from this scheme? The answer to this question requires a brief digression.

When Peter the Great introduced the Table of Ranks in 1722, it was his intention that the hereditary nobility should altogether make way for a *noblesse de service*. Those who were noble by birth, but who failed to dedicate themselves to the service of the emperor, could not count on promotion in the Table of Ranks and the prestige that came with it. Meritocracy would replace aristocracy, competence would replace prerogative, and in all kinds of ways the nobility was obliged to serve the emperor. But the system of education necessary for cultivating competence was largely lacking, and Peter's intentions were only realized to a very limited degree. Indeed, in 1762 Peter III exempted the nobility from the obligation to dedicate themselves to the service of the emperor.

This exemption was the final phase in a process which had set in soon after the death of Peter the Great. In the years 1740-1760 it

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Nicolas Belin de Ballu (1753-1815) was Director of the *Prytanée* in Saint-Cyr and professor of Greek literature in Kharkov and, from 1811 on, in St Petersburg, where he was succeeded by Graefe.

became increasingly easy for the nobility to pursue interests of their own while being formally employed by the emperor. Even without an explicit imperial decree, the foundations were being laid for a noble leisure class. Insofar as this leisure class was culturally active, its activity took the form of a literary production independent of service to the emperor. The formal exemption stimulated this phenomenon enormously, all the more since the nobility was granted the right to travel abroad. This freedom was given a firm economic basis when the landed property of the nobility received the status of legal and inalienable property and a further exemption from paying taxes was granted. Moreover, in 1783 the state's monopoly on printing and publishing was abolished, so that, despite the simultaneous introduction of censorship, the way was paved for the growth of a "public opinion". As soon as this opinion could no longer make itself publicly heard, it went underground, for instance in the form of the secret societies of the Decembrists.

The exemption granted by Peter III in 1762 and confirmed by Catherine the Great in 1785 is usually regarded as marking the emancipation of the nobility. A Russian landowner, if he so wished, could now once again spend all his life amusing himself on his estate, or perhaps enriching himself culturally of his *own* free will, without having any obligation whatsoever to the empire or the emperor. Considering it in terms of the model of Russian society as a gigantic pyramid consisting of a large number of smaller "built-in" pyramids, of which the leaders are at once *dominus* and *cliens*, one could say the emancipation ended the nobility's obligation to accept the position of *cliens*. To put it extremely: nobles could opt out of the system and remain only as *domini* at the top of their own smaller pyramids. The once "built-in" smaller pyramids placed themselves outside the large pyramid, as it were, and their leaders were consequently free.

The first emperor who took measures to confine this freedom drastically is Paul I, who for this reason is always portrayed as a tyrant. He was murdered by a group of highborn officers. A few days after the murder his son and successor Alexander I issued a number of decrees in which the nobility was confirmed in its freedom. The young noble poet Pushkin glorified the tyrannicide in his ode to freedom, the poem *Volnost*, which the authorities linked to West European ideas about freedom and human rights



and which became a source of inspiration for the noble freedom-fighters of 1825, the Decembrists.

It is hardly surprising that those ideas were warmly received by this particular group. It is hardly surprising that Pushkin sided with Brutus against Caesar. He was proud of being a descendant of one of Russia's oldest noble families, whose name "can be found on virtually every page of Russian history", and this pride was only boosted by the fact that the family's wealth had become so diminished through mismanagement that his father had been forced to accept a salaried position in the civil service. The humiliating economic dependence had found compensation in a strong awareness of spiritual independence and freedom, and it is this awareness which led to the great difference between Pushkin's antiquity and that of confirmed "servants" such as Olenin and Uvarov and their *clientes*. For this reason one cannot simply fit Pushkin into the scheme as a *cliens* of one of these two or of both or of anybody. He is the spiritual heir *par excellence* of those who won freedom by placing themselves outside the large pyramid.

Of course, there were also noble families who were always prepared to place themselves in the service of the emperor in various ways, on a voluntary basis and because of the family tradition and most certainly also with a view to their own interests and status. Examples of this category are Muraviev, Olenin, and Uvarov. Of this trio, so important for the classical tradition in Russia, it was Uvarov whose activities ultimately brought in the highest returns. Muraviev, in all likelihood, was relatively the most liberal, most constitutional of the three. In the footsteps of Catherine and Potemkin he enabled Matthaei to finish his work in Moscow; in his admiration for science (not only the science of antiquity) he devoted himself to making the University of Moscow a second Gottingen; he brought Buhle to Moscow because he recognized in him a propagator of knowledge; and he took Timkovsky and Koshansky under his wing and stimulated them not only to practise science, but also to compile grammars and other school books and to make school editions of ancient authors. Olenin above all deserves credit for having played his role of Maecenas of classical culture with prudence and conviction, Gnedich's translation of the *Iliad* being the most important and enduring result. Uvarov also paid a great deal of attention to such matters, but Uvarov did more than that.

The orientation to antiquity, which in the period 1762-1812 cannot be considered more than a passing phenomenon, was provided with a structural basis by Uvarov through his introduction of the gymnasium. The fact that he succeeded in this, despite all kinds of opposition, was in itself an achievement. Certainly he was helped by the events surrounding Napoleon and the resulting orientation to Prussia, where in about the same period Wilhelm von Humboldt's *humanistisches Gymnasium* was taking shape. But these factors could only help because Uvarov, better than anyone else in his environment, knew what was going on in Western Europe and above all could fit this knowledge into what his environment evidently regarded as a convincing view of Russia's place in the world and the place of Russian history and culture on the dividing line—or in the no man's land—between East and West. Uvarov's view was a coherent one which also offered a perspective to those who were not necessarily enraptured by the blessings of Western Europe. This view was based on German ideas: Schlegel, Schlözer, Heyne. The introduction of compulsory education in Greek at the gymnasium would never have succeeded if its supporters had only been able to base themselves on the argument that it was necessary for Russia's international competitive position simply to imitate the West or Prussia. More was at stake, Uvarov argued, and the gist of his argument was already implied in Heyne's prediction in 1768 that the knowledge and the study of Greek would enable Russia to create a national literature and national culture all of its own.

Heyne's prediction was disproved by the facts. The nineteenth century saw the blossoming of a native Russian literature. But insofar as this literature was fed by impulses from Greek (and Latin) literature, these impulses worked indirectly, through the medium of French, German, or Russian translations. The handful of translators which made this possible had more influence than the entire regiment of Greek and Latin masters who, with the introduction of the gymnasium, came to swell the ranks of the servants of sovereign and country.

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, the antiquity which gained a foothold in Russia from the reign of Catherine the Great was the antiquity of enlightened monarchy. The focus was mainly on those aspects which fitted into the frame of the patrimonial regime of the large pyramid. At first sight it would seem natural

to expect that the emancipation of the nobility created the condition for a broader interest in other aspects, in particular the political aspects of the Athenian democracy or, rather, of the Roman republic. Such interest was absent or virtually absent.

On second thoughts this is actually not so surprising: the idea that the domain of politics did not have the highest priority was inherent in the mentality of the "free" nobility, since in practice politics meant always operating in the service of the emperor. It was a form of *officium*. In Latin the term *officium* is opposed to the term *beneficium*. *Beneficium* includes everything a *patronus* does in the way of "benefactions" for his *clientela* in order to maintain an optimal *fides* relationship. His actions are "top-down". Conversely, the *clientes* are also expected to do their share: *officium*. *Officium* includes everything which a *cliens* does in the way of acts of service in order to maintain an optimal *fides* relationship.

Clearly, an emperor will generally find it harder to recruit faithful servants, *officiales*, among the self-assured members of a hereditary nobility, who hold in principle that they are not called to a life of *officium*, than among *homines novi*, newcomers from families which, precisely because they are called to *officium* in the service of the emperor, are suddenly given real opportunities for social advancement.

A second reason why interest focused on "apolitical antiquity" is that the margin within which the nobility could enjoy its freedom was limited. Although the peers stood outside the large pyramid *de jure* and economically, they still lived under the shadow of this pyramid. This was found by Aleksandr Radishchev during his exile in Siberia and, to mention another example, even a much more moderate man like Nikolai Ivanovich Novikov (1744-1828) felt the cold shadow of the pyramid.

Novikov contributed a very great deal to the propagation of enlightened ideas in Russia. He might be described as a *cliens* of Catherine herself who had cautiously ventured to emancipate himself. For a while he was even supported in this by Catherine. He belonged to those who had freed themselves, but did not have fundamental objections to autocracy. He wanted to operate "within the system". Hence he can also be styled a conservative. Novikov knew that there was room for many improvements in the Russia of his day. However, he sought these improvements not in changes in the political system, but exclusively in the

sphere of people's personal views and lifestyle, and he expected that sound education could make a substantial contribution here. Moreover, he powerfully stimulated the growth of a public opinion and the cultivation of a reading public that was as broad as possible. He published various periodicals and many hundreds of books, which he sold to the public through his chain of bookshops (in Moscow alone he had twenty). With the profits he financed various forms of public assistance: a school for orphans, a hospital where patients were treated free of charge, and a relief organization for times of famine. "These would have been counted as good deeds anywhere in the world; but in Russia they were also a political innovation of revolutionary dimensions", writes Richard Pipes. "Novikov broke with the tradition which held that the state and it alone had the right to act on behalf of 'the land'."<sup>2</sup>

All learning and all science and all art are no more than a mirage and an empty dream if they do not contribute to the improvement of people's hearts, if they do not contribute to self-knowledge, Novikov wrote in 1777 in the opening article of his monthly journal *Utrenny Svet* ("Morning Dawn"). And it is precisely with regard to this self-knowledge that so much can be learnt from the classics, he immediately adds. "Let us therefore make the classics accessible to the people of today in their own language". Thus *Utrenny Svet* published work by Plato, Seneca, and Plutarch.

Novikov was able to continue working in the same spirit until 1791, even though he was regarded with suspicion. Then he was put under a publication ban, and a year later, in 1792, he was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment without being tried. Thanks to the death of Catherine he only served four years, but that was enough to make him a broken man for the rest of his life. Although there was a free nobility, although there was a public opinion, Novikov's fate clearly shows that such benefits were only relative, all the more so when one considers that Novikov's ideas on education were distinctly conservative. The welfare of a society, he had written in 1783, could only be guaranteed if each member of that society was educated and schooled in the virtues appropriate to his social position. The idea that education could be aimed at promoting social advancement was anathema to him.

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<sup>2</sup> R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, Harmondsworth 1979, p. 256-258.

After being released from prison by Catherine's successor Paul I—a release which, as in the case of Aleksandr Radishchev, was solely due to the fact that Paul I enjoyed undoing as much as possible what his mother had done—he retreated into the small world of his country estate: “planter ses choux”.

Another example is Ivan Petrovich Pnin (1773-1805). He too was someone for whom Muraviev had secured a position in the same chancellery of the Ministry of Education where Martynov, Batyushkov, Nikolai Radishchev, and Gnedich worked. Pnin, an illegitimate son of Prince Repnin, was not the least in this company. In 1801, together with Nikolai Radishchev, he had founded the “Free Society of Lovers of Literature, Science, and Arts” (*Volnoe obshchestvo lyubiteli slovesnosti, nauk i khudozhestvu*). The members met to read work by French freethinkers and they set out their views in the journal *Severny Vestnik*, which was published by Martynov. It had also printed the Russian text of Muraviev's invitation to the professors of Gottingen to come and work in Russia. In 1805 Pnin became the chairman of the society. He died in the same year. Batyushkov honoured his memory with a poem.

The freedom which the Free Society embraced as a principle far from implied a rejection of monarchy. On the contrary, the monarch was regarded as the best guarantee of this freedom, on condition that the monarch was also willing to have his own freedom be limited by the law. For a twentieth-century Westerner this immediately raises the question of the relationship between the executive and legislative powers. For a Russian intellectual in 1800, and even still for many Russian intellectuals in 1900, the answer to this question was simple: the sovereign himself decided what the law was, but his legislative power did not relieve him from the obligation to abide by his own laws. “In Russia”, wrote Karamzin in 1811 in his *Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia*, the monarch “is the embodiment of the law”.<sup>3</sup> This formulation literally agrees with the description in Hellenistic political theory of the monarch as *nomos empsychos* and of the monarchy as

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<sup>3</sup> R. Pipes, *Karamzin's Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia: A Translation and Analysis*, Cambridge, Mass., 1959, p. 3-92; id., “Karamzin's Conception of the Monarchy”, *Harvard Slavic Studies* 4 (1957), p. 35-58, reprinted in: R. Pipes, *Collected Essays on Russian and Soviet History*, Boulder 1989, p. 37-58.

*endoxos douleia*. Karamzin shared Novikov's ideas and his *Memoir* is usually regarded as a plea against the constitutionalism of above all Speransky, whereas Pnin is usually described as someone who wanted to follow in the footsteps of Aleksandr Radishchev. However, like Karamzin, Pnin too mainly derived his ideas about the ideal state for Russia from Montesquieu: his ideal was a harmonious, stable, and hierarchically ordered state under the leadership of a strong monarchical authority, who is aware of his responsibility and does not abuse his power.

Pnin's *Essay on Enlightenment with Reference to Russia* from 1804 makes interesting reading.<sup>4</sup> It has the reputation of being a progressive essay, because it contains an extensive plea for the right of landownership for peasants and thus for the abolition of serfdom. As a result, it was prohibited and all copies—saving one—were destroyed. But apart from this plea Pnin's train of thought is patently conservative, since it is aimed at preventing any form of social change or flow. Enlightenment is defined by Pnin as the situation in which each member of society, regardless of his status, from the sovereign to his most humble servant, knows and fulfils his obligations. In other words: a pyramidal organization in which an optimal *fides* relationship governs all echelons. Everyone should know their place in the pyramid and also remain in that place. All estates, from the peasant to the monarch, are of essential importance, for each estate is an indispensable link in the chain of the whole. It is dangerous to do away with the estates, and inequality between the estates is not only inevitable but also necessary for the preservation of the state. All this will ring familiar to anyone who has read Plato's *Republic*.

Precisely with a view to the preservation of the state, Pnin considers it wrong to award the same degree of enlightenment, the same amount of education, to each estate. He argues for a separate education programme for each of the four estates of which Russian society is comprised. These four estates are the peasants, the citizens, the nobility, and the clergy. For the peasants it is best that they be schooled in the classical virtues of *industria* and *temperantia* (including temperance in the use of alcohol). Their

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<sup>4</sup> Translated by M. Raeff in M. Raeff (ed.) *Russian Intellectual History. An Anthology*, 1978, p. 125-158.

education should be an education in the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and all emphasis should subsequently be placed on agricultural training.

Pnin fundamentally rejects the idea that a member of the peasants' estate or of any estate might be given the opportunity to climb up to a higher estate. It is striking that he raises this point most emphatically in what he writes about the citizenry. The eighth commandment of his Twelve Commandments for the training of the citizenry expressly prescribes that everything must be done to prevent the citizens from becoming contemptuous of their own position and desirous of advancement as a result of their acquisition of wealth through trade. Experience teaches us, he writes, that merchants, as soon as they have gained some prosperity, are bent on securing a noble title for themselves or for their children. He is opposed to this.

The nobility as the highest estate naturally requires the best schooling, naturally—in Pnin's view—on the basis of textbooks prescribed by the authorities. Noble youths should not only be trained in the skills which they must possess in their capacity of officers in the army, but they should also be instructed in knowledge of the law and in administrative abilities. For Pnin it goes without saying that the nobility is the exclusive source of government administrators. But is it not peculiar, he writes, that there are no knowledge requirements for people who are appointed in the civil service? And is it not absurd that more attention is paid in education (note that this was written in 1804!) to Latin than to Russian? "Why teach the subjects in Latin and not in the native tongue? This time-honored custom hampers instruction a great deal, for a student who does not have a perfect command of Latin (and what need is there to know it to perfection?) will never adequately know what the instructor teaches in this language. Similarly, what is the use of teaching dead languages? ... I would wish that, instead of the all too thick-strewn flowers of rhetoric, instead of the pompous style which in its extravagance hides the ideas and produces boredom or derision, our gentleman instructors might see to it that their pupils endeavor to write in the simplest, clearest, and most readily intelligible language. The students should be reminded that they are to address themselves not to scholars but to the people".

Pnin's *Essay* failed to play a role in the educational policy of

Alexander I. For the time being Speransky was victorious. The activities of the new Ministry of Education, in particular the expansion of the number of secondary schools and universities, offered opportunities to sons of merchants and low-ranking clergymen to secure a place in the ranks of the *chinovniki* and to rise high in the Table of Ranks of the *noblesse de service*. Two examples can illustrate this.

The first is that of Ivan Alekseevich Rostovtsev. He is probably a son of the engraver Aleksei Ivanovich Rostovtsev from the days of Peter the Great. The year of his birth is unknown; he died in 1804. The name Rostovtsev indicates that the family originally hailed from Rostov, north of Moscow. This Rostov should not be confused with Rostov-on-the-Don; hence it is also called Great Rostov, Veliky Rostov. This Rostov was already a centre of Russian culture in the Middle Ages, when Moscow by comparison was no more than a village.

Ivan Alekseevich was a merchant, *kupets*, in St Petersburg and thus belonged to the bourgeoisie. With regard to the bourgeoisie a distinction is usually drawn between petty bourgeoisie and higher bourgeoisie. Someone who was allowed to call himself *kupets* and whose patronymic we know is likely to have belonged to the higher bourgeoisie. It is almost certain that Ivan Alekseevich Rostovtsev was a member of the first or second of the three existing merchant guilds and he also must have had sufficient financial means to marry his children to the nobility. This gave his children a higher social status and also the right to have serfs.

The fact is that the St Petersburg family Rostovtsev rose to great heights in the space of two generations. In the first generation it was the teaching profession which provided the upward thrust, in the second generation it was the army. The son of Ivan Alekseevich, Ivan Ivanovich Rostovtsev (1764-1807), had already been director of the schools in St Petersburg since 1800 and in 1805 he came the first director of the newly-founded St Petersburg District Gymnasium. His son Yakov Ivanovich Rostovtsev (1803-1860) was a *dvoryanin*, a nobleman, almost from the very first. This was a result of his admission to the Corps de Pages. As a young officer of the Guards in 1825 he had friends among the members of the secret societies and thus he was the man who at eight o'clock on the evening of 12 December could whisper to Nicholas I that a conspiracy was planned against him. This was the Decembrist



Conspiracy of 14 December 1825. After that many regarded Yakov Ivanovich Rostovtsev as an infamous stoolpigeon, but others, including some of his former Decembrist friends, accepted his explanation that he had acted—as was typical of a young upstart in the *noblesse de service*—for patriotic reasons and they believed his confident assertion that as a man of honour he had refused to reveal a single name to Nicholas I.

During the further reign of Nicholas I his heart was covered with decorations and medals. In 1835 he became chief of staff of all the country's military academies and training institutes. In this capacity he was the right hand and close assistant of the emperor's brother Archduke Mikhail Pavlovich, and after his death in 1849 that of the successor to the throne, the later Alexander II. When Alexander succeeded his father six years later, Yakov Ivanovich Rostovtsev succeeded the czar as the highest chief of all the military academies. It was then that he really started to manifest himself.

As is well-known, the inauguration of Alexander II as czar ushered in the period of the Great Reforms. In this period Yakov Ivanovich Rostovtsev acted as the confidant and wise counsellor of the czar, who was fifteen years his junior. He achieved prominence as a stubborn and tireless champion of the abolition of serfdom. He encouraged the czar in his resolve to press ahead with the emancipation of the peasants despite the objections of the nobility. "No right-minded and enlightened person who loves his country can object to the emancipation of the peasants. A human being should not be the property of another human being, human beings are not things". Thus wrote Yakov Rostovtsev.

On 3 January 1857 he became a member of the Secret Committee instituted by Alexander I to deliberate on the abolition of serfdom. On 4 March 1857, although he was already ill, he became chairman of the two committees which were to prepare the legislation necessary for the emancipation. Eight months before the final report could be submitted to the czar, Yakov Ivanovich died of a carbuncle on 6 February 1860. As a consolation, his widow and descendants were granted a count's title. Only the Romanovs themselves were higher. When Yakov Rostovtsev died, the abolition of serfdom had progressed so far that the czar in his manifesto of 19 February 1861 could proclaim the enfranchisement of 22 million peasants.

Yakov Rostovtsev strikes one as having an almost Roman career, the difference being that nobody in Rome ever objected to the commonplace fact that many human beings were the property of a few other human beings. One of the "Roman" elements in the pattern of Yakov Rostovtsev's regular occupations is his production of poetry. He was prolific in this, writing, among other things, a tragedy called *Perseus*, but all in all it was not of sufficient quality to warrant the inclusion of his name in handbooks on the history of Russian literature.

The second example is that of Pavl Rostovtsev. His patronymic is unknown. He is called a *kupets*, merchant, but also a *meshchanin*. The latter term has a clearly negative undertone: "lower class townsman", "vulgar commercial townsman". This may mean that Pavl Rostovtsev was not as big a merchant as his namesake from St Petersburg, Ivan Alekseevich. We know that at some point in the eighteenth century Pavl Rostovtsev moved from Rostov to Voronezh. Despite their connections with towns like Voronezh, Chernigov, Zhitomir, and Kiev, he and his descendants therefore did not belong to the indigenous population groups of the Ukraine. The Rostovtsevs were Great Russians and in the south this group was an ethnic minority.

The *meshchanin/kupets* Pavl Rostovtsev had a son, Yakov Pavlovich. He seems to have been an interesting man, the first intellectual in the family and apparently a typical "Enlightener". He lived from 1791 to 1871. He is the grandfather of Michael Rostovtzeff, the historian of antiquity who from the twenties became so famous in the West, and of Anatoly Vasilievich Lunacharsky, who from 1917 to 1929 held the education portfolio in Lenin's Council of People's Commissars. Yakov Pavlovich was not a classical scholar. He knew Latin, but had to rely mainly on translations. His preference was for Russian literature. He was a man of broad, indeed very broad interests, particularly in the fields of philosophy, economics, higher mathematics, botany, and medicine. But he was above all known as a great reader and a great pedagogue. He was born in Ostrogozhsk in the Voronezh district and was the first of his family to go to university, as a student at the Faculty of Law in the University of Kharkov. Yakov Pavlovich studied in the very first years of a university life which, despite opposition, was hesitantly and diffidently starting to flower in the provinces: in 1802 a university was established in

Dorpat, followed by Vilnius in 1803 and Kazan and Kharkov in 1804. Yakov Rostovtsev was among the first crops of students in Kharkov, as Sergei Timofeevich, the father of the better-known Slavophiles Konstantin and Ivan Aksakov, was among the first crop of students in Kazan. (Sergei Aksakov and Yakov Rostovtsev were both born in 1791.) The excitement surrounding the newly-founded universities was no doubt essentially the same in Kharkov and Kazan, and so one seems justified in giving an impression of it on the basis of what Aksakov wrote about Kazan:<sup>5</sup>

For nearly a year reports had been going about that a University was to be founded at Kazan. The reports turned out to be true, and in December 1804 the official announcement was received, that a charter for the University had been signed by the Emperor on the 5th of November. ... This event caused much excitement in the town. ... None of us knew Latin and very few German, though in the coming autumn we were bound to attend lectures delivered in both languages. ... A Latin class was started at once, and most of the future students began to tackle the language. ...

I have a sense of satisfaction and of admiration when I recall the spirit which then animated the older boys, a spirit of genuine devotion to knowledge. They worked by night as well as by day till the effect was visible in their thin and altered faces. It was necessary for the authorities to take active measures, in order to discourage such excessive zeal. ... The teachers too were spurred on by the eager zeal of their pupils, and worked with them, not in school only but in all free hours and on all holidays. ... Those were proud and happy days, days of pure love for knowledge and praiseworthy enthusiasm! ...

It must be admitted that the birth of our University was somewhat premature. Six weeks after the Chancellor's arrival, on the 14th of February 1805, it was formally opened. The staff comprised only six teachers, of whom two were professors (one for General History and one for Russian History), while the other four (one of whom taught Greek and Latin Literature) had the rank of assistants. ...

My first business was to get the sword which was part of my uniform.

The noble enthusiasm had its origin in the person of Alexander I and in the élan which characterized the Russian heyday of Frédéric-César de La Harpe, the Swiss who a good time earlier,

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<sup>5</sup> Sergei Aksakov, *A Russian Schoolboy*, translated by J.D. Duff, Oxford 1978, p. 145-148 and 154-155. On the differences between Kharkov and Kazan see I.N. Borozdin, "Universitety v Rossii v pervoi polovine xix veka", in: *Istoriya Rossii v xix veke*, vol. 2, p. 355-359. Borozdin also mentions student numbers.

together with Voltaire, Rousseau, Condorcet, and Benjamin Franklin, had embodied the quintessence of the "Philosophes" and was now the Aristotle of Czar Alexander. "Qu'est-ce que donc, messieurs, qu'un homme de lettres?" It was La Harpe who had raised this question in the French Academy as early as 1776, and he himself had also given the answer: "C'est celui dont la profession est de cultiver sa raison pour ajouter à celle des autres".

The intimates of the young czar could not but feel contempt for the traditional elite of highborn administrators. In their view it was comprised of gentlemen who preferred to cultivate their body by maltreating the bodies of others. There would have to come a new elite, a real meritocracy. The Ministry for the Enlightenment of the People in Russia was La Harpe's brainchild and as such was cherished by his Russian fellow-thinker Speransky, who was himself the successful son of a village priest. It would soon have to become a rule that no one could be employed in the civil service and rise in the Table of Ranks to the status of the new nobility (that is to say, the eighth or a higher class in the Table) without a proper school education within the educational system devised by the government and in particular without a university education. Suddenly there were immense opportunities for the *meshchanstvo*, the citizenry of the towns, the sons of merchants like Ivan Alekseevich Rostovtsev in St Petersburg and Pavl Rostovtsev in Ostrogozhsk. The nobility, however, complained. Speransky was despised by them as a *homo novus* and hated as a "tyrant".

The drama of Napoleon in Russia was responsible for dampening the enthusiasm of those golden years. Speransky was exposed as "spy" and banished; the nobility continued to resist the new-fashioned education. The in-take of students at the universities was very modest: in 1824 the University of St Petersburg numbered no more than 51 students. The University of Kharkov numbered 57 students in the first year of its existence. In 1812 there were 118. Moscow University was by far the largest: 215 students in 1811, 494 in 1820, 876 in 1825.<sup>6</sup>

By then Yakov Pavlovich Rostovtsev had long completed his studies at the University of Kharkov. He was born at exactly the right time to be able to profit from the climate created by La Harpe and Speransky. However, this climate was clearly that of the

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<sup>6</sup> P. Alston, *Education and the State in Tsarist Russia*, Stanford 1969, p. 27.

pyramid, of the sovereign as a benefactor. The truly good monarch, as the French Professor J.N. Belin de Ballu explained to his audience in the speech which he delivered (in French) at the inauguration of the University of Kharkov on 17 January 1805, the truly good monarch is not distinguished by his achievements on the battlefield, but by love for his subjects and by benefactions. What else can the subjects, in this case professors and students, do than show their gratefulness for the monarch's generosity—as a service in return: *officium*—by developing their talents as best they can and placing them in the service of sovereign and country? “Consider that your country will soon demand the price for its tender care and its love. One day you will contribute to its glory and prosperity with your virtues and your talents”.<sup>7</sup>

In 1808 the University of Kharkov numbered more than eighty students. The foundation day speech of that year was pronounced by a German professor, Ludwig Jakob from Halle: *Über den Einfluss der Universitäten auf die Cultur und den Wohlstand eines Volkes*. This speech pleads for a completely open system of education, in which the state is to ensure that everybody, regardless of their social background, may be admitted to the university, so that meritocracy can actually be realized. This is true freedom, according to Ludwig Jakob. “Where have the arts of human life been able to flourish most? Undoubtedly where there has longest been the greatest freedom of thought and inquiry, where the road of science has been open to all estates. Only completely free competition between all estates can ensure that no seed is lost, that no single talent is stifled”.

This freedom must be created by the state. “If the state does nothing at all for the sciences, only the rich will be able to devote themselves to science. ... But how rarely one finds great minds among the rich and eminent, who are already so few in number, and how much more rarely still are they desirous to use their wealth to develop inner refinement”.

He then goes on to cite ancient Greece as an example of a country where the state gave little thought to public education. How poor the state of science was there: what is Greek philosophy other than “a web of scholastic quibbles which has failed to be of

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<sup>7</sup> Text in: *Rechii, govorennyia v torzhestvennom sobranii 17 Genvaria 1805 goda pri otkrytii Imperatorskago Kharkovskago Universiteta*, Kharkov 1806, p. 28-34.

any use to human society". Positive freedom, that is, freedom under the monarch's guidance, is contrasted with the negative freedom of ancient Greece: "... did this freedom ensure that only good teachers were most sought-after and best-paid? Far from it. He who was best at blowing bubbles had the largest audience and was paid best". Professor Ludwig Jakob, it would seem, has no reason to complain about the emoluments attached to his chair in Kharkov. He is also fully confident that the "Volksfreund" Alexander with his educational policy will see to it that in the near future all senior public functions in the civil service and the army will be occupied by truly educated servants.<sup>8</sup>

Four years later, in 1812, the spirit of Schelling and of Uvarov's *Projet d'une académie asiatique* is already perceptible in Kharkov too. So much appears from the foundation day speech of B.O. Reith (1770-1824), professor of the history of the European states and statistics: *Geist der literarischen Cultur des Orients und Occidents*. The speech calls for the study of Graeco-Roman antiquity to be put at the centre of all literary education in Russia (which indeed it was, as we shall see). "Greek and Roman literature are the basis of all modern culture. The nation should learn this basis and come to grips with the classical languages. This should be the spiritual gymnastics of the Russians", for only in this way will they succeed, like the French and the Germans, "in realizing, through a harmonious conjunction of all components, the construction of the edifice of a national literature".

According to Reith, the early Russian empire of Rurik and Oleg (862-912) was already founded "am Leitfaden eines klassischen Strohmes". As early as Vladimir I (980-1015) and Yaroslav the Wise (1015-1054) the young Russian nation had drunk from the sources of Greek culture. But after that its development was curbed for centuries when the Mongols put an end to all culture. Peter the Great restored relations with the West and since then the conditions have been present for Russia to regain its own identity by emulating France and Germany, respective repositories of the principal Latin and Greek currents which have their sources in antiquity. However, such emulation should not be indiscriminate

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<sup>8</sup> Text in: *Rech, govorennyia v torzhestvennom godovom sobranii Imperatorskago Kharkovskago Universiteta, byushe 17 Genvarya 1808 goda*, Kharkov 1808, p. 49-67.

imitation. The French—lectures this learned development-aid worker—are too readily inclined to translate their “Sprach-Herrschaft” into “Welt-Herrschaft”; also there is too much restlessness, even too much friction, among them. The Germans, like the Greeks, have too much “Republikanismus” in their blood. There should be progress, but this progress should be carefully controlled by “the principle of a certain stability”: the monarch as a pioneer of progress but equally as a guardian of the national spirit.<sup>9</sup>

The student days of Yakov Pavlovich Rostovtsev in Kharkov fell in the years in which these three speeches were delivered. He must have graduated in 1814 at the very last, for in that year he was appointed teacher of philosophy, economics, and literature at the gymnasium of Poltava. In 1820 he was appointed teacher of philosophical sciences at the gymnasium of Kiev, and in 1839 director of the gymnasium in Chernigov—the same gymnasium where his son Ivan Yakovlevich would later become director—and also director of the schools in the district of Chernigov.

In 1844 he was granted the noble rank of State Councillor, thus rising to the fifth class in the Table of Ranks. It would appear that this promotion satisfied his ambitions, for no more than two years later, at the age of 55, he withdrew from active service. The son of the *meshchanin*, the lower-class townsman, became a landowner.

By then the golden days of young Alexander I had long turned into the iron age of Nicholas I. If Napoleon's entry into Russia had already prompted a reaction against the West, the unsuccessful revolt of the Decembrists on 14 December 1825, two weeks after the sudden death of Alexander I, had convinced his successor all the more that no wisdom was to be expected from the West. Alexander Herzen later noted in *My Past and Thoughts* that 14 December 1825 was the continuation of a development which had been interrupted by the death of Peter the Great. Herzen fails to do justice here to the developments described in the previous chapters of this book, but in a different respect he is right: when he first arrived in St Petersburg in December 1839, he went to Falconet's Bronze Horseman the very same evening, and while

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<sup>9</sup> Text in: *Rechi, proiznesennyya v torzhestvennom sobranii Imperatorskago Kharkovskago Universiteta, byushe 17 Genvarya 1812 goda*, Kharkov 1812, p. 53-63.

meditating on the statue he noticed that on 14 December 1825 the cannons of Nicholas I—"who always looked like a slightly bald Medusa with cropped hair and moustaches"—had been equally aimed against the statue and against the revolt. "It is a pity that the grapeshot did not shoot down the bronze Peter ..."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*, translated by Constance Garnett, revised by Humphrey Higgs, London 1968, p. 44 and 427.



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE IRON AGE: 1825–1855

Everyone agrees about one thing: Nicholas I was a very impressive looking man. Contemporaries compared him to Jupiter, Neptune, Apollo, Moses. In every company he was a head taller than the rest, and he had a face which—according to a diplomat in those days—was found only on Greek coins. Virtually no one was capable of looking him in the eye and withstanding the imperial gaze: “one could not be more emperor than he”.<sup>1</sup>

Was he therefore a true *dominus* on top of a true pyramid? Not quite, for the true *dominus* is at the same time a *patronus*, a paternal figure who inspires trust. Nicholas I inspired only fear and awe. A Western observer, Astolphe, Marquis de Custine, remarked in 1839: “What surprises me is that among the voices which I hear proclaiming the glory of one single man, there is not one which protests on behalf of mankind against the wonders of autocracy. The Russians, great and small, can be said to be intoxicated by slavery. Whereas a despot, in his pride, wishes only to have slaves, man searches for equals: but a czar has no equals.”<sup>2</sup> In short, autocracy dehumanises.

The idea of education and training is to make human beings more human. In principle, therefore, autocracy and education are diametrically opposed. And so in practice autocracy tries to make education subordinate and subservient to itself. Conversely, education—taken in the broadest sense as all activities aimed at teaching people to give shape and expression to their own ideas and feelings—is by definition a process in which the roots of autocracy can, at the very least, be exposed.

Alexander Herzen disagreed, of course, with Custine’s claim that in the Russia of Nicholas I there was no one who protested “on behalf of humanity”. He did, however, agree with Custine’s assertion that autocracy dehumanises. He also knew that

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<sup>1</sup> N. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1959, p. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Marquis de Custine, *Lettres de Russie. La Russie en 1839*, éd. présentée et établie par Pierre Nora, Paris 1975, p. 89 and 106.

education and training were the only remedy against this dehumanisation, but was gloomy about the prospects of success: only few were eligible for education, and they received "not perhaps a very comprehensive, but a fairly general and humane education: it made men of all with whom it succeeded. But a man was just what was not wanted for the hierarchical pyramid". So, having graduated and been swallowed up by the system as, say, a teacher of classical languages, one had "to dehumanise oneself"—and that, according to Herzen, is what most people did: "the sloth of the country, the dressing-gown, eccentricities, cards, wine". Or there began a time, indeed a life, of tribulation. This was the fate of those who refused to be satisfied with moral disharmony and complete self-elimination.<sup>3</sup> In 1847, at the age of 35, Herzen himself chose to live as an exile in Western Europe. He refused to continue living under the regime of an emperor who had committed "the fearful sin of the moral murder of a generation", a kind of spiritual abortion.<sup>4</sup>

But what was aborted? More specifically, how fertile was the seed of classical antiquity in the years 1825-1855? That is the question with which this chapter is concerned. I have already explained how Sergei Uvarov in 1828 had succeeded in giving Greek a structural and prominent place, besides Latin, in the educational system. From that year tens of thousands of young Russians—still a comparatively small, but nevertheless significant percentage—were introduced, through "the struggle with the classical languages", into what in all kinds of solemn declarations and speeches was called the source of true humanity. What was the effect? Did it make them more human, and therefore less enslaved? Or was classical antiquity, too, through the flexibility or manipulation of its expositors, the teachers at the gymnasia and the professors in the universities, made subservient to the autocratic system?

Both questions can be answered both in the affirmative and in the negative. Generally speaking, one can say that the authorities managed to keep things well under control. Uvarov would not have wished otherwise. When he became Minister of Education

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<sup>3</sup> Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*, translated by Constance Garnett, revised by Humphrey Higgs, London 1968, p. 418-419.

<sup>4</sup> Herzen, p. 979.

on 2 April 1833, he immediately sent a circular to all his subordinates, in which he declared that “our common obligation consists in this that the education of the people be conducted, according to the Supreme intention of our August Monarch, in the joint spirit of Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality. I am convinced that every professor and teacher, being permeated by one and the same feeling of devotion to throne and fatherland, will use all his resources to become a worthy tool of the government”.<sup>5</sup> It worked out very well indeed. But even Uvarov, always the emperor’s chief ideologist, was eventually found to be too enlightened and too liberal and was forced to step down in 1849.

Nevertheless, behind the stern facade of power, on the level of personal and incidental fertilization, there were some successes. So much so that Vissarion Belinsky, Russia’s most authoritative literary critic in the entire nineteenth century (though he lived only from 1811 to 1848) and later adopted in the Soviet Union as a champion of socialist realism, made it quite clear that the “Europeanism” (*evropeizm*, his term) so vitally important for Russian culture would only be able to weather the storms of obscurantism if it was anchored in classical antiquity. “All that is human is European; and all that is European is human”, he wrote, and for him the seed-bed of this humanity was located in Greece and Rome: “Yes, truly, Greek and Latin are the cornerstone of every education and the indispensable foundation of every school”.<sup>6</sup>

The function and the working of the classical component in Russian culture can be charted *in abstracto* and in broad outlines if we look at it from a bird’s eye view. But we can give more flesh and blood, and so more life, to the subject by going to ground level, where we can observe at close quarters and try to smell, as it were, what happened *in concreto* in the landscape and the lives of individual people. This kind of method calls for selection, on account of the enormous amount of material which offers itself to the observer. In this chapter and the three following ones I shall therefore focus on the actions and ideas, or dreams, of ten people. At least five of these are mentioned—though from a different point of view—in every handbook on Russian literature and are

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<sup>5</sup> *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya* 1834, part i, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> V. Lobanov, ‘Belinsky v ego vozzreniyakh na antichny mir’, *Germes* 1911, No. 7, p. 168-172; No. 8, p. 190-194; No. 9, p. 216-221.

more or less well-known. They are the writers Gogol, Goncharov, Herzen, Turgenev, and the professor and historian Granovsky. The better kind of handbook also mentions Nikitenko and Pecherin. Three scientists are left: Buslaev, Kutorga, and Pirogov. Pirogov is from a completely different sphere, that of doctors and hospitals, but later, in the period of *glasnost* around 1860, he played an important role in the discussions about the future of classical education in Russia. The life of Nikolai Gogol (1809–1852), that of the historian Timofei Granovsky (1813–1855), and the creative period of Ivan Goncharov also fall in the years before 1855. But each of these three famous men deserves a separate chapter. The absolute low point of this period is the seven dark years from 1848 to 1855.

For 23 years he had been the chaplain of the Mater Misericordiae Hospital in Dublin, popular with everyone, patients and nursing staff alike. In the middle of February he fell ill. For two months he was treated in his own hospital. His *table d'hôte* in Gury's hotel on Dame Street was left unoccupied. Then he asked to be moved to his house: 47 Dominick Street, a small dwelling which he shared with a large dog. Two days later he died: 17 April 1885, at the age of 77. "*Remember only thy last things and thou shalt not sin for ever*—words taken, my dear brothers in Christ, from the book of Ecclesiastes, seventh chapter, fortieth verse. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen".<sup>7</sup> He was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery, in the shadow of the colossal monument of one of Ireland's greatest sons, Daniel O'Connell.

It was thirty years ago that he had been the silent central figure in a lawsuit which had driven the waves of hatred between the Catholics and the Protestants to new heights. Herzen wrote something about it in his memoirs: he had been summoned for publicly burning a Protestant Bible in the marketplace, but when the judge considered that he had done so whilst of unsound mind, he was merely admonished to behave decently in public henceforward.<sup>8</sup> According to the version of the Irish Catholics, the accusation was false: as part of his missionary work among

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<sup>7</sup> James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Penguin edition, p. 108.

<sup>8</sup> Herzen, p. 1397.

the Irish godless he had organized a burning of pornographic and other reprehensible printed matter. This fuel had supposedly been brought along by the new converts themselves. No one could say with certainty whether or not it had included one or two Protestant Bibles. The accused was acquitted on lack of evidence. All Dublin had celebrated the verdict as a triumph for Catholicism.

The last words of Pope Gregory VII on his deathbed in Salerno in 1085 were: "I have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile." They were quoted by the chaplain of the Mater Misericordiae Hospital in Dublin in a letter dated 7 September 1863 to Prince Pyotr Vladimirovich Dolgorukov, a sinister gentleman who liked to fish in troubled waters. "Behold", the chaplain explained his reference to these words of the dying Gregory, "behold the inscription over my life and my epitaph after my death!"

This chaplain, then, was a Russian: Vladimir Sergeevich Pecherin. For years nothing had been heard about him in Russia and he had been sought in vain in Europe, but in the beginning of the 1860's some contact was re-established. By then it was known in Russia that he had been converted to the Church of Rome in 1840 and had even entered a monastic order, not that of the Jesuits, as Herzen had written, but that of the Redemptorists. For the orthodox conservatives in Russia this report had been as shocking and incomprehensible as it had been for the atheistic progressives. Pecherin had even studied Roman Catholic theology in Wittem Monastery in the Dutch province of Zuid-Limburg, had been ordained as a priest there, and had become a teacher of prospective Roman Catholic priests. In 1861 he turned his back on the Redemptorists in search of more Roman Catholic monastic austerity, first with the Carthusians and then with the Trappists. This did not satisfy him either, and so he had ended up in Dublin in 1862.

In 1863 it had occurred to someone in Russia that Pecherin as a Russian Roman Catholic might be able to mediate between Russia and Poland—Poland was engaged in one of its many uprisings against Russia. Mikhail Katkov, a leading journalist in Moscow, published a rather mild article on religious tolerance in connection with the Polish question. In this article he also wrote approvingly about Pecherin, without shirking the sensitive issue of his conversion to Roman Catholicism and without condemn-

ing the conversion. "Do we have the right to throw stones at him because he has turned to the Church of Rome? Let us rather be joyful: he was never more than a paper member of the Russian Church, and now, at least, he has become a good Christian". Pecherin should be given permission to return to Russia, and Pecherin himself was only too eager to do so.

It was not to be. A week later the historian and (Pan-)Slavist Mikhail Pogodin—professor in the University of Moscow—published a furious reaction. Pogodin held that renegades like Pecherin, precisely because they were so gifted, deserved opprobrium and that it would be perilous for the spiritual welfare of countless Russians to forgive Pecherin his errors and to readmit him into the country. "For nothing in the world would I allow Pecherin to live in Russia and play the (Roman Catholic) priest, for he will make even more proselytes than he used to do when he taught Greek here".

It sufficed. There was no place for Pecherin in Russia. He did, however, gain a place in Russian literature: he was the model for Ivan's story about the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov*. It is interesting to read that story in the light of Pecherin's response to Pogodin's article, which he included in his letter of 7 September 1863 to Dolgorukov, who made it public. In his response Pecherin warmly sympathizes with "the heroic deeds and the valiant suffering" of the Catholic clergy of Poland in its battle against Russia. "If I were in their place, I would do exactly the same". "I have never held the view that Catholicism, in whatever country, should serve as a pillar of autocracy and should help Nero to execute rebellious Christians. I believe in unlimited freedom of conscience and a conjunction of democracy and Catholicism. Real faith is namely the faith of the common people, not the faith of the emperor; real faith is not the faith of the Jewish aristocracy, but the faith of the fishermen. It is the faith of the humble fisherman Peter which has caught the world in its net. Emperor Constantine did more evil than good by giving it his high protection. The church could have done without him and perhaps that would have been better". And then he quotes the last words of Pope Gregory VII.

Pecherin did not return to the bosom of his mother country. But he soon felt constricted in the bosom of the mother church too: his memoirs are warmly recommended by the Marxist-Leninist

editor of the 1932 text edition as a source of useful information about the hypocrisy, greed, and corruption of priests and monks. In Dublin Pecherin always managed to conceal his criticism of these servants of the church under the cloak of his love for his patients and his work.<sup>9</sup>

In this chapter we are mainly concerned with Pogodin's remark about Pecherin as a teacher of Greek at the University of Moscow. Pecherin taught there for just one year: 1835–1836. The story of what preceded that year will plunge us *in medias res*.

Pecherin's friend Aleksandr Vasilievich Nikitenko was born in 1804. His father was a Russian serf. Together with roughly 300,000 others, he was the property of a certain Count Sheremetev. Unlike the vast majority of these 300,000, Vasily Nikitenko had managed to work his way up through self-tuition, although his legal position, of course, remained that of a slave and a non-person. His "humanisation" was the result of the fact that, as a young boy, he was selected for the count's boys' choir in Moscow. This privilege also involved some schooling. When his voice broke, he was sent back to the country in Voronezh. There, on the basis of what he had learnt in Moscow, Vasily Nikitenko continued his programme of private study. He was responsible for, among other things, the bookkeeping of his master's estate, he quarreled with everyone, and he made himself useful as a village teacher and doctor.

The son had first been taught by his father, but when the time had come he had not been admitted to the gymnasium in Voronezh, as this school was not meant for serfs. So, instead, he decided to start working as an unqualified teacher himself. This was in 1818, when he was living with his parents in Ostrogozhsk. His school was accommodated in the house of the mayor. The

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<sup>9</sup> Herzen, p. 1385–1397; V.S. Pecherin, *Zamogilnye zapiski*, Moscow 1932 (this book deserves an English translation; the only translation known to me is in Dutch: *Van over het graf*, translated by Tom Eekman, Amsterdam 1990). Literature on Pecherin: M.O. Gershenzon, *Zhizn V.S. Pecherina*, Moscow 1910; id., *Istoriya molodoi Rossii*, Moscow 1908, p. 75–173 (recently translated: *A History of Young Russia*, ed. and transl. by James P. Scanlan and Edna Lippman Lief, Irvine, Calif., 1986—*non vidi*); A. Lipski, "Pecherin's Quest for Meaningfulness", *Slavic Review* 23 (1964), p. 239–257; P. Scheibert, *Von Bakunin zu Lenin. Geschichte der russischen revolutionären Ideologien 1840–1895*, Leiden 1970, ch. i.

local elite of landowners, merchants, and clergymen entrusted the education of their children to him. This arrangement satisfied everyone except the young schoolmaster himself. He wanted to be free and he wanted to continue his studies at the university. Since this ideal seemed unattainable, he got himself a pistol, intending to commit suicide.

It helped. The possession of the pistol alone made him realize that although he was not free, he at least had the freedom to decide whether or not he wished to go on living. For the time being he decided that he did.

In 1822 he became the secretary of the newly founded local branch of the Russian Bible Society, a pious organization with its headquarters in St Petersburg. The president of the umbrella organization of all local branches in the empire was Prince Aleksandr Nikolaevich Golitsyn. He is usually described by historians as a naive and even bigoted religious maniac, who as a reactionary minister of education (1816-1824) only prejudiced the cause of popular enlightenment. Yet he was the man who, as a benevolent *patronus* of his secretary in godforsaken Ostrogozhsk, together with another *patronus*, the Decembrist (!) and poet Konraty Ryleev, saw to it that in 1824 Aleksandr Nikitenko was given the status of freeman and was enrolled in the University of St Petersburg.

There the newly enfranchised Nikitenko got into trouble through his connections with the Decembrists (Ryleev had procured board and lodging for him with one of them), but fortunately it turned out all right. That it turned out all right was due to the good relations which Nikitenko maintained with another familiar figure: the "traitor" Yakov Rostovtsev.

Today Nikitenko is above all well-known for his diary. He wisely burnt his notes on the year 1825 directly after the affair of 14 December, but on January 1826 he started afresh and did not stop until the year of his death: 1877. Reminiscences of his childhood have also been preserved. The fully printed text of his diary fills three thick volumes, covering a period of 51 years and containing all kinds of unique information about many people and affairs in the academic and cultural life in St Petersburg and elsewhere in Russia.<sup>10</sup> In 1832 Nikitenko became an Assistant

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<sup>10</sup> A.V. Nikitenko, *Dnevnik, v trekh tomakh*, Moscow 1955-1956; heavily



Professor of Russian Literature, in 1833 he was appointed censor, and in 1834 Professor of Russian Literature in the University of St Petersburg.

As a professor and scholar he never amounted to anything. As a censor he was much more important. All his life he cautiously tried to relax the censorship regulations, while at the same time advising various writers and poets, including Pushkin, Gogol, and Goncharov, in their attempts to choose their words in such a way that they might pass the censor intact, without causing problems for the censor or giving the author the feeling that he had bowed too deeply to the authorities. The art of verbally camouflaging ideas reached a high degree of sophistication in those days. There was a name for it too: "Aesopic language". Peter the Great's preference for Aesop's ancient fables was now transformed by the subjects of his empire into a subtle defence against the spying readers-with-red-pencils, who decided on behalf of their beloved supreme leader what could or could not be printed. Censorship encouraged the development of a kind of secret language. One might almost say: censorship leads to symbolism.

Measured by what could be printed in Russia in the nineteenth century, the effect was not so great, certainly if one compares the nineteenth century with the twentieth century in this regard, but it was definitely a nuisance, and it often assumed patently absurd forms. Thus Nikitenko soon found himself under arrest for eight days in 1834 because he had passed a translation of a poem by Victor Hugo: "Enfant, si j'étais roi"... The more liberal censors were permanently in an awkward predicament, because they never knew where they stood. Sometimes there was a period of *glasnost*, but the only time that Russia had a truly free press is in the eight months from March 1917 until two days after the storming of the Winter Palace by Lenin's *bolsheviki*.

In his diary Nikitenko shows himself a faithful friend and admirer of Pecherin. They got to know each other in 1828, when Pecherin joined the "circle" of young sympathizers with which Nikitenko had surrounded himself. Pecherin studied classical languages at the university. Since a German private tutor from Hessen had introduced him to Plutarch and his moralizing

biographies of historical heroes from the Graeco-Roman world, classical antiquity had become for him a romantic dream world of freedom and equality, the total opposite of the tyranny which he saw all around him. The teaching at the university and its approach to antiquity completely failed to correspond to this romantic conception. Professors rattled off the little they knew from their yellowed notebooks, and students wrote down the dictation in their new notebooks, learnt it by heart, and rattled it off again to their professors. The thirst for knowledge was largely quenched with grammatical and etymological facts. Those who reproduced the drill in the right way passed with flying colours and were regarded as classically trained.

Pecherin tried to find the dream world of antiquity on his own by throwing himself into Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Ajax*. In 1831 he published his findings in an article in the periodical *Syn Otechestva* ("Son of the Fatherland"). His interpretation of these plays is a typical example of the phenomenon that people are always inclined to project themselves, their own situation, and their own reaction to this situation into texts from the past, which they then call classical and use as a confirmation and legitimation of their own ideas. It is understandable, in view of his Russian background, that Pecherin saw himself reflected in the character of Antigone and recognized Nicholas I in her antagonist, the tyrant Creon, even if this went against Hegel's interpretation, prevalent in Germany at the time, which claimed that the conflict between Antigone and Creon was a clash of "right" against "right". The evidently Christian-Platonic element in his interpretation is less understandable, and indeed unacceptable on the basis of the text: the fundamental idea which he attributes to Sophocles is that these tragedies hold out the prospect of a different and higher and better world, of which the world of everyday reality is no more than a badly deformed and squalid reflection. The comparison with the godseeker and drop-out Skovoroda, mentioned in the second chapter of this book, urges itself irresistibly upon one.

The only scholar from whom Pecherin learned anything was Graefe. Graefe was not a very inspiring figure, and in his diary (17 August 1826) Nikitenko even calls him "the terrible Graefe, scourge of all students who are not proficient in Latin", as Nikitenko might well know, since he himself was not proficient in Latin. But at least Graefe could offer a serious, if rather limited

(not to say narrow), philological schooling to students who felt attracted to it and had the ability for it. Graefe and Pecherin got on well with each other and thus it was that in 1829 or 1830 Graefe indirectly brought him into contact with a certain Baron Rosenkampf.

Baron Rosenkampf had been a favourite of Emperor Alexander I. At the succession of Nicholas I, however, he suddenly fell into complete disfavour, and so from 1825 he lived together with his wife in absolute solitude and isolation. How someone rejected by the new emperor could lose all his friends from one day to the next has also been described by Herzen in his memoirs.

Pecherin's daily contacts with Baron Rosenkampf and even more those with the Baroness strengthened his belief in the dream world of antiquity and his aversion to everyday life in St Petersburg. He read Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* of course, and at the same time—this being, after all, the reason why Graefe had sent him to the baron—he read and copied Greek manuscripts of a work by the Byzantine scholar John Scholasticus. This man, a patriarch of Constantinople (565-577), had collected all the laws on ecclesiastical matters decreed by his Emperor Justinian in what is now called the *Collectio lxxxvii capitum*, and Baron Rosenkampf wanted to have a legible copy of it for his studies in the field of Old Russian canon law. In leisure moments the baron, in the safe seclusion of his study, freely criticized everything that was wrong about Russia in general and about the person of the emperor in particular, while the baroness poured out tea and explained what a young man should do and not do to obtain “a beautiful soul”, and the young man quietly listened and stored everything he heard in his sensitive mind. He felt like one of the family and the childless baroness in fact treated him like a son. Meanwhile the baron would shake his head and utter Horatian profundities about (French) newspaper reports on the first unsuccessful operations of the Russian army during the Polish revolt of 1830—*consili expers mole ruit sua*, “Brute force without wisdom falls by its own weight” (Horace, *Carmina* III 4, 65—the poem in which Horace exultantly states that even an emperor cannot do without the Muses).

The young man thus saw a way of escaping from the stranglehold of despotism: “I dreamt an absurd dream full of happiness; I dreamt of a life lived in solitude, with the sole companionship of

my Greek and Latin authors, shut up in a monastery cell with ancient manuscripts”.

A person who was favoured by Graefe, who liked to read Goethe, and who moreover published translations of Schiller's *Sehnsucht* and epigrams from the Greek Anthology, could not fail, sooner or later, to attract the attention of Sergei Uvarov. This happened in 1831, when Uvarov was Assistant Minister of Education and Pecherin was trying to amuse himself more or less at the “small” balls of German society life (no high society) in St Petersburg: “I dragged myself off to the girls”.

Looking back in his memoirs, he describes his contacts with Uvarov as a grave sin of his youth. Uvarov himself described Pecherin in a letter as an amiable young man “of the St Petersburg kind”, somewhat Byronic, somewhat inclined to show off his budding literary talent. Pecherin writes: “I grew terribly fond of Uvarov; I soon got into the habit of visiting him without a reason, to pay my respects to him. I even went to see him in his country house”. In vain Baroness Rosenkampf warned him not to taint his “beautiful soul”. “My slavish Russian nature was getting the better of me. I was standing on the edge of a yawning abyss”. This was in 1831-1832.

It is time to transfer our attention to the University of Moscow. On 27 September 1832 Uvarov, in the company of the great Alexander Pushkin, was a guest at Professor Davydov's series of lectures on Russian literature. Uvarov introduced Pushkin to the students: “Behold”, he said, pointing to Davydov, “the art critic; behold”—an arm flung out towards Pushkin—“Art itself”. Among the students was Ivan Aleksandrovich Goncharov, since 1859 the famous author of *Oblomov*.<sup>11</sup> “I simply cannot express how completely enraptured we were by the sight of our idol”. But Goncharov was not only enraptured by the mere sight of his idol Pushkin. He also tells us that, after the lecture, Pushkin immediately attacked the view of the guest speaker that evening, the historian Mikhail Kachenovsky, that the Lay of Igor's Campaign (the *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, 12th century) was probably an Ossian forgery from the late eighteenth century and not, as all true Russians would have it, an authentic fragment of a Russian

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<sup>11</sup> See his memoirs in *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 7, Moscow 1952, p. 193-223.

Homeric epic. Pushkin defended the authenticity of the work. He was right, though this was only discovered in the dark years of the Second World War in an explosion of scholarly firework—mainly by Roman Jakobson—during a conference of Russian *émigrés* at the Ecole Libre in New York. But it says a great deal for Kachenovsky's scientific integrity that he refused to abjectly brush the arguments against the authenticity of the Lay, which were still very strong at the time, under the carpet of traditional "patriotism".

The sight of Pushkin and his performance that evening are a high point in Goncharov's memories of his student years. These were the years from 1831 to 1834, which thus partly overlapped the student years of Alexander Herzen: 1829-1833. The joint visit by Uvarov and Pushkin seems to have escaped Herzen's attention; in any case he fails to mention it in his memoirs. He does write about the week-long working visit which Uvarov paid to the university in 1829. Herzen was a first-year student aged seventeen, and he dwells at some length on his introduction to Uvarov, because he was one of the students singled out to give a talk in the presence of the eminent visitor. It was his first public performance. Without succeeding in disguising his conceit under a transparent layer of irony, Herzen describes how, after various others had floundered, all hope was pinned on him—"Uvarov asked for something a little livelier and for a student with 'his tongue well hung'"—and how well he brought it off. "Uvarov promised me a book as a souvenir of the occasion, but never sent it."

Herzen was far from impressed by Uvarov. He calls him a "Prométhée de nos jours", "only he stole the light not from Jupiter, but from men", and he has only other derisive things to say about him, in a manner which, no matter how one wishes to judge Uvarov and his undeniably dismal points, does little credit to Herzen himself:

He amazed us by the multitude of languages and the heterogeneous hotch-potch which he knew; a veritable shopman behind the counter of enlightenment, he preserved in his memory samples of all the sciences, the concluding summaries, or, better, the rudiments. In the reign of Alexander, he wrote Liberal brochures in French; later on he corresponded on Greek subjects with Goethe in German. When he became Minister he discoursed on Slavonic poetry of the fourth century, upon which Kachenovsky observed to him that in those days our forefathers

had enough to do to fight the bears, let alone singing ballads about the gods of Samothrace and the mercy of tyrants.

There is more wit in Herzen's story that Uvarov walked around with a letter from Goethe in his pocket, in which Goethe supposedly wrote that Uvarov had achieved what Goethe himself could not, that is to say, he had been able to forget that there was such a thing as German grammar.

By contrast, Herzen is surprisingly positive about the intellectual climate in Moscow and its university. The fact that the situation in Moscow was better than that in St Petersburg is attributed by him to the absence of the czar. Moreover, after "1812" Moscow had become the symbol of Russian national consciousness and national pride. The university had consequently become the focus of spiritual life in Russia, while the spiritual life in St Petersburg had ended gloomily after 14 December 1825.

Indeed, until 1848, according to Herzen, the University of Moscow was "purely democratic", that is to say, its gates were open to "everyone who could pass the examination, who was neither a serf nor a peasant". Sure enough, the German professors were "slavishly Western" and completely uninterested; they had not a word of Russian and refused to learn the language; and the Russian professors knew only Russian and refused to learn any other language, unless it was a dead one; they were all boorish seminarists who behaved like lackeys; the only thing the Germans and the Russians had in common was that they secretly despised each other and were intemperate, the Germans in smoking heavy cigars, the Russians in drinking spirits. But despite all this Herzen ends his summary with the surprising conclusion that Moscow University "did its work": "It is not the function of a university to give a complete training in any branch of knowledge; its business is to put a man in a position to continue to study on his own account; its work is to provoke inquiry, to teach men to ask questions". Herzen goes on to mention two professors who satisfied these requirements, and this is reason enough for him to assure that "the professors whose lectures contributed to the development of Lermontov, Belinsky, Turgenev, Kavelin, and Pirogov may play their game of boston in tranquillity and still more tranquilly lie under the earth".<sup>12</sup> Of

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<sup>12</sup> Herzen, p. 94-96, 108, 111-112, 115-117.

these five writers, Turgenev studied in Moscow only for one year: 1833-1834. Then he decided that it would be better for him to continue his studies in St Peterburg. Nikolai Ivanovich Pirogov (1808-1881)—also mentioned by Herzen as one of the successful products of Moscow University—was Russia's best and most famous anatomist and surgeon in the nineteenth century. He was even famous in Western Europe: in 1862, during his march from Sicily to Rome, Garibaldi had been struck by a bullet which had vanished into his body. His physicians were unable to find the bullet, which Garibaldi was understandably eager to be rid of. So Pirogov had to be called in. He came, sought, found, and removed the mysterious bullet.

In Russia Pirogov played a remarkable role for some years after the death of Nicholas I as an advocate of a progressive educational policy in the debates over the function of the gymnasium and *klassitsizm*. More than anyone else, Pirogov was convinced that, for the sake of what he called "general humanity", there *had to be* a place for Greek and Latin in truly modern gymnasial education. The origin of this firm conviction is probably to be sought partly in his experiences as student at the University of Moscow, where he studied medicine from 1824 to 1827. At the end of his life he committed his recollections to paper, including an autobiography of which the German translation is called *Lebensfragen. Tagebuch eines alten Arztes* (Stuttgart 1894).<sup>13</sup>

The medical training at the University of Moscow amounted to little in the 1820's. Its deficiencies were decried by Pirogov himself: "... I had never yet seen a typhoid patient, I had never yet held a lancet in my hands, my entire practical work in the clinic consisted of my having to describe one case of a patient whom I had visited only once. But how happy I was with my doctor's diploma". He only really developed into an anatomist and surgeon when he continued his studies at the German-speaking

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<sup>13</sup> For Pirogov use has been made of: N.I. Pirogov, *Izbrannye pedagogicheskie sochineniya*, Moscow 1952 (with a helpful introductory essay by V.E. Smirnov, "Zhizn i pedagogicheskaya deyatelnost N.I. Pirogova (1810-1881)", p. 7-51); *Prazdnovanie stoletiya so dnya rozhdeniya N.I. Pirogova v Kievskoi pervoi gimnazii*, izd. Kievskoi pervoi gimnazii, Kiev 1911; *Pamyati N.I. Pirogova. Privetstviya i Rechi*, Kiev 1911; G.V. Levitsky (red.), *Biografichesky Slovar professorov i prepodavatelei Imperatorskago Yurievskago, byushago Derptskago, Universiteta za sto let ego sushchestvovaniya (1802-1902)*, vol. 2, Yuriev 1903, p. 261-268.

University of Dorpat, and later in Berlin and Gottingen. But that is beyond our compass here.

What does concern us is Pirogov's description of his introduction to Moscow student life in 1824–1825. This life took place in a large student's room which he shared with other students, all on a scholarship. "I entered the room. All along the walls there were empty beds and little tables. On every table lay piles of yellow, red, and blue books and packets of notebooks. On one of the beds lay a kind of cap, with the inside turned upwards. Something was written on the inside. I tried to decipher it. *Hunc pil...*—here the letters had been worn away, I couldn't make them out. *Fur rapidus manibus tangere noli: possessor cuius fuit semperque erit Chistovius, qui est studiosus quam maxime generosus.*\* I understood. But who was this Chistov?" (\* "This cap ... Do not touch it with your rapid hands, thief: the owner is and always will be Chistov, an extremely generous student.")

Chistov also turned out to be a medical student. "An emaciated figure, with thick black hair, a leaden colour in his face, a dark blue smooth beard". The young Pirogov is aggressively tested by Chistov on his knowledge of antiquity. It was not extensive: only a bit of Latin, which he had been taught by a student called Feoktistov, a room-mate of Chistov and now also of Pirogov. "Which Roman authors are you familiar with?' I coloured. 'Not very many, I suppose?' 'Well, to be honest, I didn't learn very much from Feoktistov'. 'Feoktistov? He doesn't know a word of Latin. Sit down, there! I shall read to you from Ovid. Have you ever heard of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*?' 'Yes, I've heard of it, but that's all'. 'Well, just listen'. And Chistov started to scan fluently and passionately. In half an hour I learnt more from him than I had ever learnt from Feoktistov. I concluded that Chistov must be a real expert on the Roman classics, and so he was. I rarely saw him bent over his medical handbooks; he was nearly always occupied with his beloved Ovidius Naso or with Horace. Chistov had been a seminarist, he came from the lower clergy. There was an enormous difference between him and the others, most of whom were also seminarists. These others were firewood, but he was mahogany, a true poet in spirit".

Even in old age Pirogov is still impressed. Chistov had a friend who often visited them and who was cast in the same mould: "He had a limp and was deathly pale. His hair was always tousled.



There was something passionate in his face. When he spoke, he almost choked from excitement and anybody who was sitting anywhere near him was sprayed with his saliva. He jumped from one subject to the next. He would not listen to objections. Czar Alexander? A good-for-nothing compared with Napoleon. Napoleon, now that was a genius! Have you read Pushkin's *Volnost* ('Freedom')? It's no good at all. Revolution is only revolution if it's done in the French way, with the *guillotine*! Etcetera etcetera. There was something new every day. Had he been born a generation later, he certainly would have belonged to the nihilists. At that time he was only a freethinker. Of God and the church these sons of the church would have nothing. They were completely indifferent to anything connected with religion".

Pirogov also relates how one of his room-mates, someone from the firewood category, had jumped up onto one of the tables—the room blue with smoke—to recite a few lines from Pushkin's *Volnost*, the same lines which were quoted in the previous chapter in Nabokov's translation:

You, your throne I abhor.  
Your downfall, the death of your children  
I see with cruel jubilation.

Then came the Decembrist Conspiracy. Then Nicholas I. Some time later Nicholas II. And the rest ...

Goncharov, then, studied from 1831 to 1834. He was not of the Chistov mahogany type. Dostoevsky's brief characterization is familiar enough: "a man with the soul of a bureaucrat, without ideas, and with the eyes of a boiled fish, to whom God, as a joke, gave a brilliant talent". Under ordinary circumstances he would have started to study in 1830, but in that year the university was closed on account of a cholera epidemic. The advantage of this epidemic, somebody wrote in 1859, was that it rid the university of a number of people who "had grown too obsolete for scholarly pursuits" and thus there was room for "newcomers with modern views and new goals".<sup>14</sup> The advantage for Goncharov was that he could spend the extra year learning Greek, since knowledge of

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<sup>14</sup> V. Setchkarev, *Ivan Goncharov. His Life and His Works*, Würzburg 1974, p. 10.

this language had just become compulsory for those who wished to go to university.

In August 1831 Goncharov sat for his entrance examination.<sup>15</sup> Professor Semen Ivashkovsky tested him on his knowledge of Greek, taking a passage from Xenophon's *Anabasis*. Everything went as planned. The professor had been given to understand by the authorities that he should not make things too difficult for the candidates on account of their brief preparation time. Goncharov humourously describes how he was interrupted and corrected every time he read a word and tried to translate it. "I got all the stresses wrong, and the professor could not bear to hear it. This set me completely at ease, and I diligently looked for words in the text which I knew, as one looks for acquaintances in a crowd of people".

Of his examiner Ivashkovsky we are told nothing more. Perhaps he had not yet formed the curious habits which Buslaev, six years younger than Goncharov, mentions in his memoirs. Buslaev not only remembers that Ivashkovsky always appeared in knee-length riding boots and with a large white cravat, but also that he associated with his students in a very special way. He insisted that the students, while waiting for his lecture to begin, should all pace up and down the lecture-room chatting with one another. The professor would steal in unnoticed and be swallowed up in the crowd, "like at a jumble sale". He would greet no one, and no one was allowed to draw attention to his presence. Not only was one permitted to bump into him and push him aside, he actually enjoyed it. Some managed to draw him casually into their conversation, and if they did it cleverly he would hesitantly start to chat along with them. The operation was a complete success if one managed to keep him talking till the bell went at the end of the lecture. Then Ivashkovsky would slip out of the room with a happy grin on his face. If he had not been successfully engaged in conversation in this way, he would walk over to his lectern after ten minutes, where he would cast a fond look on his young audience. "This meant that it was time to get down to business. We would then take a seat with a lot of stamping and noise, and when it was finally quiet, the professor would mount his lectern without making any kind of haste, and the lecture

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<sup>15</sup> See note 11.

started". It never became clear to Buslaev what the purpose of this ritual was, but his description does give an impression of Professor Ivashkovsky's teaching.

Goncharov was a decent, unremarkable student. In the first year he was taught Greek and Latin by Obolensky and Kubarev, who, a generation earlier, had both been decent students of Roman Timkovsky, the Isocrates to Matthaei's Socrates. "They lovingly helped us take our first steps". The second year was the most enjoyable. "Now it became serious and we became pedantic. As students we formed a kind of republic; there was only the authority of science and of the teachers. Official authorities—rector, curator, inspector—rarely showed themselves". Except for the one time when Goncharov was caught by the rector during a German lesson. He was the only one in class with a book on his desk: Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum*. It was a small book, but no less forbidden for that, and he was forced to hand it in, which was painful in a period when books of this kind were still scarce.

But in general Goncharov was very happy and thought everything peaceful and idyllic in a seemingly kind of way. Among the students there were a few rogues and rakes who sometimes played pranks, such as changing around shop signboards at night, but they were exceptions to the rule. Most were conscious of their dignity, behaved decently, and enjoyed a good reputation among the citizens. This was good for their morale. They were free from the tyranny of school and family, their horizon was broadened, and they learnt what real freedom was.

Goncharov has different ideas about real freedom from Pirogov's friend Chistov in the twenties and his own contemporaries Belinsky, Herzen, Stankevich, and Lermontov. He knows that limits are set to freedom inside the university, but he thinks this is a good thing. Freethinking and politics do not belong in the holy temple of science, and this ought to be rigorously maintained, even if it meant that a lecture might be prohibited or a professor be banned from teaching. There was to be no "Aesopic language": students should not be given the chance to detect hidden messages in the professor's words, and if they thought they did, it would be better to silence the professor. But this should not be taken to extremes.

In his third and final year as a student it was taken to extremes. This was in 1833-1834, Turgenev's first (and only) year at

Moscow University. Goncharov attributes the deterioration to the arrival of a new assistant curator, a certain Golokhvastov. Goncharov is rather tight-lipped about it, saying only in general terms that the atmosphere of an innocent paradise of science was thoroughly spoiled. But Herzen brings help here. For Dmitry Pavlovich Golokhvastov (1796-1849) was a cousin of Herzen. He was also a pedantic classical scholar, one of those who look forty years old at the age of eighteen. Deep down he felt that higher education was unnecessary—a store of Latin quotations to strew around in salons was handy to have, but one did not need a university for that—and so he attempted systematically to belittle students and spy on them. Until 1849 Golokhvastov showed a great sense of duty in doing his utmost to ensure that everybody at the University of Moscow toed the line, including, of course, the professors.

Goncharov thoroughly acquainted himself with many of the classics during his student years. Besides his confiscated Sallust, he also mentions Homer, Sophocles, Aristophanes; Plautus, Virgil, and Tacitus. It is remarkable to find two comic poets in this list of six names. Indeed, he gives them an additional compliment. Homer and Sophocles, he writes, offer the reader splendid vistas of heroism and ideals, and without ideals life is a diminished thing. But in comedy we find concrete reality and that is worth something too. For comedy teaches us that people fall short when they are measured by their ideals. He finds this comic rather than tragic. "Never forget yourself and your limitations and do not wrap yourself in God's mantle" is the motto he devises to sum up the message of the classical comedy of both Aristophanes and Plautus.<sup>16</sup>

God's mantle. Now that was precisely Vladimir Pecherin's favourite piece of clothing, although this was not yet clear when he was standing "at the edge of the abyss" with his "beautiful soul" through his contacts with Uvarov in St Petersburg. But this soul would be saved too.

In February 1833 Pecherin had been sent for by the Minister of Education, the concerned pietist Prince Karl Andreevich Lieven,

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<sup>16</sup> M. Ehre, *Obломov and his Creator. The Life and Art of Ivan Goncharov*, Princeton 1973, p. 42-43.

who was still Uvarov's immediate superior at the time. The minister had first given him a good dressing-down for his frivolous lifestyle on the fringe of high society and had then told him that he was one of the select few to be sent to Berlin for further studies, in preparation for a professorship in one of the Russian universities. This was on 13 February. Pecherin grasped at the offer with both hands. Who would not want to use such an opportunity? Nobody, except Aleksandr Nikitenko. He had already been nominated in 1827 for a period of study in Berlin, but had declined the honour. This kind of sojourn abroad cost a great deal of money, which was paid by the government, but only on condition that the recipient do something in exchange after his return. At the time Nikitenko was still so impressed by his recent enfranchisement that he regarded this condition—teaching at a Russian university for a period of fourteen years—as an unacceptable restriction of his new freedom. Pecherin, however, did sign.

Once in Berlin, Pecherin soon noticed that he—like his fellow scholarship students, but they were less worried about it—was being closely monitored, even in his own room, by a pietistic watchdog of Prince Lieven, a certain Reverend Kranichfeld. He immediately wrote an angry letter to Graefe, and through Graefe to Uvarov, in which he seriously complained about “the prying of this Berlin bigot”. If we are to believe Pecherin, the letter made such a deep impression in St Petersburg that Lieven had to resign as a minister in favour of Uvarov. He thus implicitly suggests that Uvarov owed his appointment as a minister to him, Pecherin. But that would mean that events had taken a very rapid turn indeed, since Uvarov's term of office already started on 21 March 1833! The official reading was that Prince Lieven had asked to be resigned for health reasons.

Pecherin enjoyed himself immensely in Berlin. There were plenty of coffee houses and newspapers, and he also made new friends, including Pirogov, Kutorga, the historian M.M. Lunin, and the Latinist D.L. Kryukov.

Mikhail Semenovich Kutorga (1809–1886) was an exact contemporary of Gogol and slightly younger than Pirogov and Pecherin. He would be the first Russian historian of antiquity to become well-known in the West. He had only studied at the University of St Peterburg for one year when he was awarded a place at the

Professors' Institute in Dorpat, where he spent four years together with Pirogov from 1828 to 1832. Lunin and Kryukov studied there for two years from 1830 to 1832.

Dorpat was "semi-foreign": it was inside the borders of the Russian Empire, but its university (founded in 1632, refounded in 1802) was wholly German and wholly oriented to Western Europe. Many German and French ideas entered Russia via Dorpat and the university had a particularly good reputation in the field of natural science. It was therefore an extremely sensible idea to set up a training institute for future Russian professors here. The idea came from Georg Friedrich (in Russian: Yegor Ivanovich) Parrot, who had taught physics in Dorpat and had taken up residence in St Petersburg in 1827 as an *akademik*. The plan was realized by Uvarov. The institute survived for ten years, from 1828 to 1838, and in this period it turned out twenty-two professors.<sup>17</sup> Then St Petersburg decided that its future professors could more profitably be sent to Berlin straightaway.

In Berlin, after the university was founded in 1810, August Boeckh (1785-1867) was the man who guided the first steps of all prospective classicists. For many years he set out his views on the nature, essence, content, function, etc., of philology in a series of lectures of which a text was reconstructed ten years after his death on the basis of his own notes and those of his students. In 1966 this text was republished: *Enzyklopädie und Methodenlehre der philologischen Wissenschaften*.

Reading its programmatic first chapter, one cannot get away from the impression that, by historicizing, Boeckh continually tries to dissociate himself from the neo-Humanistic idealization of antiquity, without wishing to give up the exemplary function of a normative classical antiquity inherent in this idealization. Thus he rejects the idea that only the study of classical antiquity can teach people true and full humanity as "a presumption of philologists not justified by experience". All philologies, whether they are concerned with texts from Mediterranean antiquity or with texts from other regions and periods, have equal rights, even if the classical texts are, after all, slightly more worthwhile: "the poetic works of antiquity stand still higher than all others, which only

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<sup>17</sup> K. Siilivaska (red.), *Istoriya Tartuskogo universiteta 1632-1982*, Tallin 1983, p. 82-83.

those who have a superficial knowledge of them fail to recognize; still there nowhere rules a higher spirit than in antiquity".

The ideas of antiquity can and should, according to Boeckh, be placed "in a living relationship to modern thinking". They will then have a "cleansing effect", for antiquity teaches us that the two extremes of rule by the masses, "the dreams of socialism and communism", and the rule of the autocrat, "the absolutism of despotism", are both equally objectionable. These are the very two extremes between which, as we now know in retrospect, the entire history of Russia in the nineteenth century was enacted. The absolutism of despotism presented itself to Boeckh's Russian students as a rather commonplace reality, but sometimes, when they were back home, it could become a nightmare.

Of course, one could pretend that the problem did not exist. One could, as a loyal follower of the great teacher, follow his example by steeping oneself or—if this was not enough—burying oneself in Science. With Boeckh there is a clear gap between what he *says* about the educational value of antiquity and its poetry and philosophy and what he actually *did* in the practice of the scientific study of antiquity. In practice Boeckh was not very interested in poetic values and philosophical wisdom. Boeckh believed that material historical knowledge of ancient society was much more valuable than an ahistorical philology which confined itself to the external and formal aspects of a text. He lashes out at philologists who, for all their erudition, are completely lacking in factual knowledge: "For want of facts they eagerly fasten onto words and split and dissect them". Boeckh is quoting words from Jean Paul here, and indeed he is very outspoken, but what kind of work did he himself do? Clever technical studies, widely acclaimed by later scholars, on the economic aspects of Athenian democracy. And although this was a new field of research, it was also purely antiquarian, involving detailed examinations of inscriptions, matters of chronology, metrology, prosody. In short: "realities".

On account of this realism, Boeckh is often regarded as the very opposite of Graefe's teacher, the "very learned grammarian-on-horseback" Gottfried Hermann in Leipzig, with his predilection for "die Worte" and thus for textual criticism, grammar, and other branches of linguistics, and—likewise—prosody. However, whether one opted for Boeckh or for Hermann, in both cases the

purely scientific approach fostered various forms of sterile anti-quarianism, which was no doubt highly interesting and even fascinating for a select circle of insiders, but in the long run lacked any connection with contemporary culture, and thus was ultimately relegated to a modest position in a remote corner of this culture.

In the 1830's this was still concealed in the lap of the gods. The great era of Pauly's *Real Encyclopädie der classischen Altertums-wissenschaft* was yet to begin. It could begin, and continue, and the circle of fascinated insiders would only grow, because and so long as the dominant groups in society were prepared to believe in the ideology of "the value of classical education". For the time being it was the belief in antiquity as a utopia which had to settle for a modest position in a remote corner.

"In philology one *must* be pedantic to some extent, if one is not to lapse into error through neglect of detail". These are words of August Boeckh, but the idea equally suits Gottfried Hermann. Hermann disagreed with Boeckh's view that the aim of philology was purely historical. But he did concur with Boeckh's claim that the difference between philology and philosophy or between philology and physics was that, for the philologist, the result of his inquiry, his knowledge, is an end in itself, whereas for the philosopher or the physicist it is a means: "Philology objectively presents to itself the knowledge of what it has come to know. Philosophy, by contrast, also recognizes what it has come to know, but does so in order to build on it, as when the natural scientist uses the inquiries of others to get new results, which he bases on them. *With the latter philology has nothing to do* [my emphasis]".

"Die Zeit der Einseitigkeiten ist angebrochen", Goethe already wrote in 1820. In 1832 he died. "Mehr Licht", his legendary dying words. A year later Pecherin and Kutorga met in Berlin. Kutorga was thoroughly enjoying his studies under Boeckh and Ranke, and this is quite understandable. He became the first Russian who knew how one should study antiquity in a scientific way. This was a step ahead, but something was also lost. Pecherin was not satisfied with Boeckh, and this, too, is understandable. He wanted "mehr Licht", indeed, he wanted—as he wrote in a letter to Nikitenko—"light and warmth".

Professor Eduard Gans, a pupil of Hegel, opened up new perspectives. In March 1834 Pecherin again wrote to Nikitenko:



"Today Gans concluded his series of lectures on the philosophy of history. The room was packed. At the end the eloquent professor afforded us a glance into the future: in the theories of the Saint-Simonists and in the rebelliousness of the workers he saw the beginning of the imminent social revolution. The term 'populace' will disappear, the lower classes will work their way up to the level of the upper classes, just as, earlier, the middle class worked its way up to the level of the nobility. History will then become the history of all classes together; they are united in a radiant whole from which the new, higher order will subsequently proceed. Thus the prophecies of Christianity will be fulfilled. Tears came to my eyes, and the entire room was deathly quiet, as if one was bidding adieu to the past and listening, full of trembling, to the giant steps of the near future, which seemed to be knocking at the door of the large lecture-room".

Eduard Gans had compared the outbreak of the July Revolution in Paris to the coming of Christ. Mazzini became the new saviour for Pecherin, and the new book of Revelation appeared in 1834: Lamennais proclaimed in his *Paroles d'un croyant* the renovation of crumbling Europe, the end of tyranny, the liberation of the oppressed, the descent of a new Jerusalem. Pecherin was fascinated and wanted to be the new Christ himself, wrapped in God's mantle.

Apparently he had seen the light. He wrote poems, "Roman evenings on Monte Pincio", the product of a stay in Rome and published under the pseudonym Dr. Fussgänger. Occasionally one still finds the following quatrain quoted:

I revel in the deepest hatred of my country!  
How eagerly I now await its devastation!  
In its destruction I shall have the joy to see  
the morning dawning of the final resurrection!

The three exclamations marks in four lines are typical. Early in 1834 Nikitenko receives a epic poem from him, *Torzhestvo smerti*, "The triumph of death". It is an allegory. The first part describes the downfall of "the ancient capital", the city of the famous Greek tyrant Polycrates of Samos (c. 540-522 B.C.), who succeeded in making his island the centre of a "sea empire" for a short while. In the poem this stronghold of despotism sinks down to the bottom of the sea, after the goddess Nemesis—retributive justice—has decided to avenge centuries of insult and has ordered the waves of

the sea to swallow up the tyrant's city. In a chorus the work of the goddess is praised by "the nations". They also see "five extinguished stars" reappear in the heavens: Aesopic language for St Petersburg and the five executed Decembrists.

In the second part the poet describes the apotheosis, the actual triumph of death. A chorus of "young nations" sings a hymn to death, who is extolled as the god of motion, of eternal change, and of freedom. The poet himself is also singing a hymn to death amidst the ruins of the defunct world. He is glad that his "dream of unfulfilled hope" has come true, and in the distance he sees how the sky turns red at the first glimmer of dawn (over Russia). He himself dies too, but his death makes the renovation and rejuvenation of his country possible. His blood is the sacrifice which redeems the country of its sins, and on "the day of honour", the day of his death, the poet's soul flies to Russia to make its beneficial powers felt there.

The controlling idea in the poem is the belief that despotism in the world is doomed to collapse and make way for freedom. Russia is irretrievably lost: no matter how much the people of Samos curse their despot Polycrates, they too must fall with him. The task of the poet, as he sees it, is to fight for the triumph of what he—together with Nikolai Pirogov—calls "general humanity".

For a number of years the poem circulated only in hand-written copies. Later Dostoevsky ridiculed it amusingly in a famous chapter of his novel *The Devils* (Part iii 1, 3: Karzaminov's literary reading). At a certain point in "The triumph of death" the poet cries out to God: "I am not inferior to you, I shall recreate the world in my way". In another work from the same period Pecherin also presents himself as God's rival—or his chosen one. Goncharov's warning that man should not wrap himself in God's mantle was ignored by Pecherin: he believed in his "manifest destiny".

While Pecherin saw the light in Berlin, Fyodor Ivanovich Buslaev swotted for his final exams in Penza and passed them. The only remarkable teacher whom he had there—briefly, only in first form in 1829—was his Russian teacher: Vissarion Belinsky.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> All data derived from his memoirs: F.I. Buslaev, "Moi vospomina-

In July 1834, a year after obtaining his gymnasium diploma, Fyodor Ivanovich, sixteen years old, said goodbye to his mother, who was thirty-two and had already been a widow for eleven years. He was going to Moscow to study in the Historico-Philological Faculty. He travelled by covered wagon, and after a six days' march he saw a signpost near a halting-place: Penza 300 verst, Moscow 300 verst. It was the only thing he saw on his trip, and it made quite an impression. Throughout the journey he read and tried to learn a handbook on General History by rote in view of his entrance examination. Not only did he have to pass, he also had to win a government scholarship. The money he had with him would last two months. At home he had heard that the houses in Moscow were made of white stone and that the city, like Rome, was built on seven hills. His mother had given him a letter for Kastor Nikiforovich Lebedev, who had lodged with her in Penza in the past and was now continuing his studies in Moscow.

At school Fyodor Ivanovich Buslaev had acquired the usual small amount of knowledge. He had studied Koshansky's handbook, of which his teacher Belinsky spoke so slightly. The Latin master read aloud from Cornelius Nepos or Sallust and explained the grammar. The pupils translated, word for word. The principal was a stocky elderly man. Every day, with dignified, slow steps, he walked to the school, a simple stone building with two storeys, the front door in the middle, and overlooking a square. He always walked with his eyes on the ground, in summer in a dress-coat, in winter in a green fur coat with a brownish silver grey raccoon collar.

Greek was not taught at the school. This was no drawback for the young Buslaev, for he wanted to become a doctor and in 1833 one could still study medicine without knowing Greek. But his mother, a rather anxious character, ferreted out a Greek tutor from the local seminary, who in the space of a year, in exchange for board and lodging, taught Fyodor Ivanovich Greek from alpha to omega and also trained him in Latin conversation. This would stand him in good stead later, when he was examined in Latin by the Latinist D.L. Kryukov.

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niya", *Vestnik Evropy* 25, kniga 10 (October 1890), p. 645-684; kniga 11 (November 1890), p. 5-55; kniga 12 (Deember 1890), p. 513-548.

When Buslaev arrived in Moscow with his wagon in the summer of 1834, he found out that Lebedev was not there. He would not be back until two months later. "It was a horrible time. I can't at all remember how I first went inside the university, to whom I turned to be admitted to the exam, how I found out where and when I was supposed to appear for the exam. All I know is that, for my first day of exams, I suddenly found myself in a large room full of lads unknown to me. These were the other candidates. They were spread out over the benches, which had been placed against the windows in a number of rows. In front, in an empty space, there were four or five small tables, at some distance from one another. Behind each table sat an examiner. I do not know with which subject my exam started and how it proceeded and how it ended. Nor do I know what I was asked and what I answered. All I know is that I was intensely aware at the time that my fate was to be decided there".

"I was standing in front of one of these tables and sitting opposite to me was the theologian Professor Pyotr Matveevich Ternovsky. A full beard and stern eyes. Exalted and unapproachably remote. During the exam a young man aged about thirty went to him. He stood still, looked at me, and listened to what I was saying. When I had finished my answer, he asked me where I was born and where I had gone to school. I named my teachers, including Lebedev. It turned out that he knew him well. 'If you need anything, come to me'. Relieved, I returned to the other candidates. They told me I had spoken with Pogodin. I owe my admittance and the scholarship to him".

Pogodin was the same man who later so efficiently prevented Pecherin from being readmitted into Russia, for fear that he would prove too attractive as a teacher.

Nevsky Prospekt, "the general channel of communication in Petersburg". Nevsky Prospekt, "I always wrap myself more closely in my cloak when I pass along it and try not to look at the objects which meet me. Everything is a cheat, everything is a dream, everything is other than it seems". Nevsky Prospekt, "Here you meet people conversing about a concert or the weather with extraordinary dignity and sense of their own importance. Here you meet a thousand incredible types and figures. Good

heavens! what strange characters are met on Nevsky Prospekt!"<sup>19</sup> Nikolai Gogol was busy leaving his indelible stamp on the city of the North with its greyish opaque coloration, was repainting it in surrealistic colours. His short story *Nevsky Prospekt* appeared at the beginning of the new year, January 1835.

Of the main characters mentioned in this chapter so far—nine of the ten announced at the start—there was only one who one certainly could *not* run into on Nevsky Prospekt in 1835. This was Alexander Herzen. He had been arrested in Moscow in June 1834 and remanded in custody for nine months on trumped-up charges. In March 1835 he was found guilty and a month later he was deported to Perm, whence he was almost immediately sent through to Vyatka, close to the Asian border, where he arrived on 19 May and would stay for two and half years. "In the loneliness of my exile in Vyatka, in the filthy environment of the government clerks, in that gloomy, remote place, separated from all that was dear to me and put defenceless in the power of the governor, I met many warm hearts". One of these warm hearts belonged to a certain young man called Andrei Efimovich Skvortsov, who taught at the gymnasium there. All we have left of him besides his name is a fragment of the letter in which he wrote to Herzen how deeply he regretted Herzen's transfer to Vladimir in January 1838. "Help me for the sake of that life to which you called me; help me. *I want to learn*: indicate some books, prescribe anything you like, I shall use all my power ..."<sup>20</sup>

Buslaev was not in St Petersburg either, but not because he had been exiled. For the rest they were all there. The last person on our list is Timofei Nikolaevich Granovsky. All we need to say about him at present is that in 1835 he had just graduated and was roaming Nevsky Prospekt, where he could have run into Goncharov, who had come to St Petersburg in 1835. They were both looking for work. Goncharov found work, or something to do, at the Ministry of Finance: a quiet job as a civil servant, sharpening pencils for the chief clerk, which he did for seventeen years. This left him time to translate Winckelmann, among others, into Russian, although later he had no compunctions about using the

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<sup>19</sup> English translation (*non vidi*): N. Gogol, *Tales of Good and Evil*, translated by David Magarshack, London 1949.

<sup>20</sup> Herzen, p. 276.

manuscript to light the stove (according to Karel van het Reve). He made extra money as a private Latin tutor in the home of the painter Nikolai Maikov, for his two sons Apollon and Valerian. There he met Nikitenko, Turgenev, and Dostoevsky, to mention but a few.

Other people one might meet on Nevsky Prospekt in the summer of 1835 were the Berlin crowd: Pirogov, Kutorga, Pecherin, and two mentioned in passing, Lunin and Kryukov. They would soon swarm out again. Only Kutorga remained in St Petersburg. Lunin was sent to Kharkov, Kryukov and Pecherin to Moscow, where we will run into them again. Pirogov, whom we will follow first, went to Dorpat. From the point of view of science he was the most fortunate.

Pirogov had not really learnt a great deal in Berlin. The surgeons there, he had found, knew less about anatomy than those in Dorpat. In Dorpat he had discovered that if a surgeon wanted to treat his patients with any hope of success, he had to have a thorough knowledge of anatomy, and this was a subject one could only learn in the dissecting room. He started to entertain serious doubts about the anatomical expertise of his Berlin teacher Dieffenbach when the latter had dismissed the fear of his students that while operating on a hernia they might cut a stomach artery as a “chimera”, instead of properly explaining how such risks might be avoided. Pirogov had then gone to Göttingen, and only there had he found the teacher who really knew about topographical and surgical anatomy. His name was Konrad Martin Langenbeck.

After quickly having published a treatise on plastic surgery (the first in its field in Russia) during his stay in St Petersburg in 1835, Pirogov became Professor of Surgery in Dorpat in 1836. It was a special appointment, for in Dorpat it was customary that only Germans were appointed professors. He delivered an inaugural lecture, entitled *Über die Vorurtheile des Publicums gegen die Chirurgie*, in which he again underlined the importance of anatomy as the indispensable foundation of surgery. In his endeavours for a more scientific approach as a factor in the humanization of medical services and hospitals, he introduced “clinic lectures” and spoke up for an improved division of labour between physicians through specializations according to the kinds of diseases to be treated.

His teaching activity was enormous, eight hours of lecturing a day, and he devoted another eight hours to his tasks as the medical superintendent of the surgical clinic and to his anatomical research and experiments. During the five years of his professorship in Dorpat he also made regular excursions to Riga, Reval, and other Baltic towns, where he instructed the local physicians and helped them treat their patients. In 1837-1838 he published his *Chirurgische Anatomie der Arterienstämme und der Fascien*. This is the first great work by a Russian anatomist. It appeared in French and in Latin as well as in German, going through four editions (the fifth and last edition appeared in St Petersburg in 1881) and earning Pirogov a reputation in France for the first time, as transpired during a visit to Paris in 1838.

The year 1840 saw the first publication by a Russian doctor in the field of orthopaedic surgery. Again it was Pirogov: *Über die Durchschneidung der Achillessehne als operativ-orthopädisches Heilmittel*. Again it was based on knowledge previously gathered from animal experiments. A year later Pirogov was appointed Professor of Applied Anatomy and Hospital Surgery at the Medico-Surgical Academy in St Petersburg. Anatomy continued to be the main focus of his publications. One can specially mention his *Ange wandte Anatomie des menschlichen Körpers*, of which there are also French and Russian editions (1843, 1844, 1845). He gave surgical training a solid scientific basis by founding a separate Anatomical Institute, of which he became the first director and for which he enlisted a trained prosector from Germany. The number of dissections which he performed in the years of his professorship in St Petersburg is estimated at 11,600. This number is based on surviving records.

In the history of medical science the year 1846 is of cardinal importance: in this year, in a hospital in Boston, the American William Morton carried out an operation under narcosis for the first time. Thus 1846 is the year in which anaesthesia was born. This discovery did not escape Pirogov's attention. As early as 1847 he published the results of his own experiments with the anaesthetic ether: sixty animal experiments, forty experiments on healthy test subjects, fifty operations. These results were simultaneously published in Russian, German, and French. One of the German accounts can be found under the title *Neue Methode der Einführung der Aether-Dämpfe zum Behufe der chirurgischen Operationen*

in the sixth volume of the *Bulletin physico-mathématique* of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg. Thanks to Pirogov, the application of ether and, shortly after, chloroform as anaesthetics soon became widespread. He himself applied the new discovery on a large scale when, for six months in 1847, he carried out pioneering work as an army doctor in the Caucasus, where Russian troops were engaged in hostilities against the Turks. For Pirogov it was an introduction to the organizational and practical problems of medical care to war casualties.

On his return to St Petersburg he was sharply admonished by the Minister of War for some sign of negligence in his uniform. Pirogov regarded the incident as yet another grievous symptom of the total insensitivity and total lack of humanity with which particularly people in authority in Russia treated each other and, even more, their inferiors, and he felt deeply insulted. The incident was brought up in the salon of Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, and she consequently invited Pirogov to visit her.

Elena Pavlovna (1806–1873, so two years older than Pirogov) was sister-in-law to the czar through her marriage to Grand Duke Mikhail Pavlovich—a notorious brute. In her salon one could regularly meet a motley company of scholars and artists. The salon was more than just a place for agreeable conversation: it was a seed-bed of enlightenment and progressive thinking.<sup>21</sup> Elena Pavlovna's great example was Georges, Baron Cuvier, whose acquaintance she had made while being brought up as a young girl in Paris. He had taken up residence in Paris in 1795, where, besides being Professor of Comparative Anatomy at the Collège de France, he had also been appointed Inspector General by Napoleon and charged with the reform of education in France, Holland, Italy, and Germany.

It is important that, thanks to the lessons of Baron Cuvier, Elena Pavlovna had become intensely interested in political and social problems and in the creation of a network of imperial policy makers and executives, whose positions were high enough to have some influence on the decision-making process. Elena Pavlovna did not conceal her admiration for Pirogov and with her tact, concern, and charm succeeded in making him give up his

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<sup>21</sup> W. Bruce Lincoln, *In the Vanguard of Reform. Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats 1825-1861*, DeKalb 1982, p. 148-162.



intention to resign. It was the beginning of a close and long friendship.

In 1848 St Petersburg was afflicted by a cholera epidemic lasting six weeks. Pirogov performed autopsies on the corpses of more than eight hundred cholera victims. In 1840 he published the results in Russian and French: *Anatomie pathologique du cholera morbus*. In the same year the account of his journey to the Caucasus appeared: *Rapport médical d'un voyage au Caucase*. Pirogov was a man of undisputed qualities and international renown. This was confirmed in the fifties by the publication of his *magnum opus*, a large atlas of topographical anatomy, in four folio volumes, with full-size illustrations of 970 cross-sections and 768 pages of descriptive text: *Anatomia topographica sectionibus per corpus humanum congelatum triplici directione ductis*. Because the dissections had been carried out on frozen corpses, the atlas became known as "Pirogov's ice anatomy".

This work forms the end point of Pirogov's career: in 1854 he resigned because he refused to accept the appointment policy of a university board and a government which did not take it for granted that university teachers should also be active scholars and scientists. It was the time of the seven dark years of Nicholas I.

Another scholar who would gain international renown, if in a different field and less spectacularly than Pirogov, was Mikhail Kutorga. In August 1835 he was appointed Adjunct Professor in the University of St Petersburg and in January 1836 he took over the job of the discharged Nikolai Gogol. He typically became a man who, as a rigorous scholar in Western style, specialized in the history of the ancient world, wished to free Russia and himself of an inferiority complex vis-à-vis the rest of Europe. Like Pirogov, he had not been satisfied by Berlin alone, but had also studied in Heidelberg, Munich, and Paris. In the course of his further career he even made three extensive journeys to the ancient Mediterranean world of Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt.

He was a man after Uvarov's heart. When in 1838 he had defended his doctoral thesis, amid great interest on the part of students, the minister personally did him the honour of acting as opponent. After Kutorga's death one of his students described this event in rather adulatory terms—in the customary style of Russian necrologies which is so treacherous for later historians:

"There he stood behind the lectern, not even twenty-nine years old. He looked impressive, noble, and charming. He formulated his sentences with dignity and *élégance*, his Latin was correct, his German was as fluent as his Russian. He did not yield an inch from the theses which he was defending, it was a splendid defence of a thorough study of the sources in the original, of a quality which today, fifty years later [i.e. 1886, the year in which Kutorga died], is still seldom seen".<sup>22</sup>

In 1839 a French edition of this dissertation was published: *Essai sur l'organisation de la tribu dans l'antiquité*, on the nebulous problem of the *phylai*, or tribes, in earliest Greek history and too technical to be discussed here. Kutorga himself had it translated into French by a certain M(onsieur) Chopin, initial(s) unknown. George Grote mentions the book somewhere in a footnote in his *History of Greece* (part ii chapter 10), which was widely read in the nineteenth century, and is not very impressed there: "many of his positions are advanced upon very untrustworthy evidence". But he does appreciate Kutorga's attempt to demonstrate a fundamental analogy between the social structure of the Greeks, the Romans, the Germans, and the Russians in the earliest period of their history. In fairly recent Soviet historiography Kutorga is still praised for the "dialectical" way in which he searched for "laws" in history: "a step in the right direction", so to speak. With a pat on the shoulder on Marx's behalf.<sup>23</sup>

For the students of the 1830's Kutorga was a revelation compared with what they were used to. At last a teacher who did not merely read out from a handbook or inundate them with an acid rain of names and dates. At last a teacher who forced one to think and who got excited during exams and would not stand for it if a candidate offered him lists of facts dutifully learnt by rote.

Modern studies from Eastern and Western Europe on Russian historiography of the nineteenth century all agree about the significance of Kutorga as a committed Westerner and supporter of a gradual development towards a freer intellectual climate in Russia; about the significance of Kutorga as the first historian to

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<sup>22</sup> G.S. Destunis in *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya* 246 (1886), *sovremennaya letopis*, p. 3-14.

<sup>23</sup> E.D. Frolov, *Russkaya istoriografiya antichnosti (do serediny XIX v.)*, Leningrad 1967, p. 131; V.I. Kuzishchin (izd.), *Istoriografiya antichnoi istorii*, Moscow 1980, p. 78-80.

point out the importance of the social and economic history of antiquity above purely factual history; about the significance of Kutorga as a professional teacher, who time and again impressed upon his students the importance of original research and also taught it systematically and competently to the more advanced students. This took place during the *privatissima* at the professor's home (so real *privatissima*), which were the Russian counterpart of the "Seminar" introduced by Ranke in Germany.<sup>24</sup>

All this sounds very positive, but in practice matters were not quite like the picture suggested above. His list of publications contains a number of interesting titles, but in the main it is interesting only for confrères. Kutorga certainly did not become the George Grote of Russia; he was too much an epigone of August Boeckh for that. Kutorga believed that the word science should be spelt Science and that the cause of Science was a serious cause, which was to be conducted in a worthy manner. Thoroughly aware of his superiority over them, he took this further than most of his scientifically less gifted colleagues. Nikitenko's diary offers a telling example of this.

During a conversation with colleagues (on 27 March 1840) Nikitenko had complained about the custom of delivering long orations in Latin during public meetings of the university. Now knowledge of Latin, as I remarked before, was not one of Nikitenko's strong suits, but he did feel justified in his claim that Latin speechifying was not good for the public image of the university. "In this way we become alienated from the public". The others agreed, except Kutorga, who expressed aristocratic indignation. That all the solemn Latin, precisely through its alienating effect, placed the university and Science and, last but not least, esteemed colleagues, those who practise it, on an even higher pedestal, was, on the contrary, a good thing: "one should not detract from the dignity of Science". The others had not thought of this. Nikitenko conceded and vented his annoyance in a testy entry in his diary.

The point is that Kutorga, apart from his vanity and conceitedness as one-eyed king in the country of the blind, held that science—in his case the study of ancient history—was an end in

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<sup>24</sup> H. Hecker, *Russische Universalgeschichtsschreibung*, München 1983, p. 82-84 and 94.

itself. The political climate of autocracy strengthened this attitude. His Moscow colleague Granovsky openly opposed it, as we shall see. As a result, Kutorga and Granovsky came into serious conflict on the matter. The conflict, one might say, ended in a victory on points for Kutorga. This did not fail to affect the cultural function of education and research in the field of classical antiquity. *Faktopoklonstvo*, adoration of the facts, the facts for the facts' sake, a kind of scientific "l'art pour l'art" but less glamorous, became the hallmark of "Altertumswissenschaft" in the second half of the nineteenth century.

On 15 June 1835 Nikitenko wrote in his diary an account of an evening with Kutorga, Pecherin, and a third visitor. The three had just returned from Berlin and in the evening at his home had told him about their experiences. All three were filled with apprehension about having to spend the rest of their lives in Russia. Pecherin was gloomiest of all. After Berlin, Rome, Naples, and various other exciting places in Europe, "he was now back in Asia". The only negative thing about Europe, they all agreed, was that the Europeans openly expressed their aversion to anything that was Russian. The Russians were the new Huns, the new barbarians, and it had pained them to hear this literally proclaimed *ex cathedra* by learned professors.

Kutorga found his niche in Russia; he does not make the impression of having felt terribly unhappy in his new existence. But Pecherin is a different story. He saw the writing on the wall when approaching the Russian border on his way to St Petersburg early in June: "Half sleeping and half dreaming I stopped at the border; I woke up, lifted my eyes, and saw an inscription which did not bode well: *voi ch'entrate, lasciate ogni speranza*.\* I foresaw what lay in store for me" (in his letter to Count Stroganov dated 23 March 1837). (\*"You who enter here, abandon all hope": the inscription over the gate of hell in Dante's *Inferno*).

Back to Uvarov and Graefe. Graefe was for Pecherin the most important member of the committee of the Academy of Sciences charged with weighing the merit of those who had returned from Berlin to determine their future position in Russia. Pecherin was to present himself to the committee with an exposition on Pericles' Funeral Speech in Thucydides. This is the speech in which Pericles sings the praises of democratic Athens at the height of its

power and in the full bloom of its culture, the Athens of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, of Socrates and Aristophanes, of Herodotus and Thucydides. Pericles commemorates the dead:<sup>25</sup>

Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not membership of a particular class, but the actual ability which the man possesses. No one, so long as he has it in him to be of service to the state, is kept in political obscurity because of poverty. And, just as our political life is free and open, so is our day-to-day life in our relations with each other. We do not get into a state with our next-door neighbour if he enjoys himself in his own way, nor do we give him the kind of black looks which, though they do no real harm, still do hurt people's feelings. We are free and tolerant in our private lives; but in public affairs we keep to the law. This is because it commands our deep respect.

We give our obedience to those whom we put in positions of authority, and we obey the laws themselves, especially those which are for the protection of the oppressed, and those unwritten laws which it is an acknowledged shame to break.

Athens as the complete opposite of Russia. For what kind of polity and society were the Russians expected to lay down their lives? For a society where, as Uvarov would later declare, one simply did not have the right to express one's opinion in public, where science was castrated in blind obedience, where freedom of movement was smothered in the swaddling bands of the newborn babes, where everybody had become petrified in grossness and moral rape, where the people were slaves and where the individual—as Herzen's friend Nikolai Ogarev put it—was free only “like a beetle tied up by one leg”.

The committee asked Pecherin to advance scientific arguments *pro* or *contra* the authenticity of the Funeral Speech. Was it really Pericles speaking here, or was it perhaps a charming piece of “history-fiction” contrived by Thucydides? Pecherin addressed this academic question with the desired academic arguments, the committee of the Academy was satisfied, and on 7 August 1835 he was appointed teacher of Greek literature at the University of

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<sup>25</sup> Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, translated by Rex Warner, Harmondsworth (Penguin) 1980, p. 145 (ii 37).

Moscow. In autumn he did the exam for his master's degree, in Latin, on the encyclopaedia of philological sciences (August Boeckh). Early in December he submitted the dissertation which was also required for his master's degree—the work dealt with a subject with which he had been occupied before, but as a poet and translator, the Greek Anthology, Uvarov's favourite collection of Greek epigrams. There was nothing poetic about the dissertation, but nor was there supposed to be. Textual criticism, "philologie pure", Gottfried Hermann, that was the objective: *Observationes criticae in universam Anthologiam Graecam*. On 31 December 1835 followed the promotion to associate professor.

By then Pecherin had already been standing behind the lectern as an unqualified teacher for four months. He was a teacher who could work magic. Fyodor Buslaev came under his spell: "The professor of Greek was a very young man, younger than all his colleagues. He was of small stature, energetic, and rapid in his movements, a very handsome man to look at, elegant in every respect. A sympathetic, kind-hearted man, with friendly eyes and a cordial, warm voice. He taught Homer and Sophocles and was a masterly translator".

Buslaev's judgement accords with that of other eye and ear witnesses. Yury Samarin wrote of Pecherin's lectures that they were something entirely new and that they were conspicuous for their artistic perfection. Ivan Aksakov remembers the combination of erudition and scientific soundness with the vividness and poetic nature of the presentation. He also remembers how Pecherin radiated a mysterious kind of agitation from the lectern and how painfully and sensitively he would react to any contact with the sour and harsh Russian reality, the slick piety of his colleague Snegirev and the safe and compliant cynicism of his colleague Pogodin. Pogodin himself was not yet as hostile to Pecherin as he was after the latter's conversion to Roman Catholicism. He appreciatively noted that in no time Pecherin had so far won the students over that they all chose Greek and in a year's time made extraordinary progress. Pecherin was becoming the ideal professor.

He himself had different plans. From the very beginning he led a most frugal and sober, even ascetic, life. He wanted to save up as much money as possible, so that he could return to Western Europe. This had already been his wish before he had started on

his journey from St Petersburg to Moscow. In July 1836 he left Moscow. He would never return to Russia.

For five months there was no news from him. In December 1836 he wrote a letter to his friends in St Petersburg from Lugano. He needed money. Nikitenko and three others sent 400 roubles. Again there were three months of silence. Urgent requests and appeals to resume his tasks in Moscow remained unanswered. Not until 23 March 1837 did he write his first letter, from Brussels, to the Curator of Moscow University, Count Sergei Stroganov. In this letter he plainly announced that he would not return. "I have made my decision, my fate is irrevocably determined, I cannot go back on it".

He tries to explain his decision to Count Stroganov. "Ah, my dear Count, what misery you gave me by calling me to Moscow. I know, you did so with the best of intentions. But when I saw the brutish life there, those humiliated beings, those people who are only interested in money and cramming themselves, those people on the foreheads of whom one vainly seeks the signature of their Creator, when I saw all this, something snapped inside me. Would I have to spend the rest of my life there? Who knows, I thought, soon you'll become like them yourself, you'll inevitably assume their colour, descend to their vulgarity, wallow in the filth of their company; you'll become a well-adapted loyal professor, stuffed with money, covered with decorations, and capable of every kind of baseness".

"I was seized by a deep despair, an incurable sadness. The idea of suicide loomed in my mind like a dark cloud. The only question left was how I would commit suicide. Should I kill myself at once with a revolver, or should I make myself rot away through some slow poison? I became filled with hatred and repulsion for my environment and this was the only feeling I could still cherish. In my work I always appeared cheerful and with a friendly smile for everybody. I was like the Spartan boy who shows nothing and continues to smile, while the claws of a wild animal concealed under his clothing is ripping his bowels to pieces".<sup>26</sup>

The strongest argument which he advances to justify his "escape" is that, as a result of his ascetic lifestyle—he ate only

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<sup>26</sup> See Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, ch. 18.

bread and a few black olives—he saw visions at night and heard the voice of God, who urged him to take up his cross. The cross—God’s mantle. The parallel with the Gallo-Roman aristocratic sons from the late Roman Imperial Age is complete: figures like Eucherius of Lyon, Honoratus of Arles, John Cassian, Hilarius of Arles, Salvian of Marseille, who all turned their backs on “the world”, took the call to imitate Christ literally and became the first hermits and monks, drop-outs and holy men at once.<sup>27</sup> After leaving Russia, Pecherin first wandered around for four years. On October 15 1840 he joined the order of the Redemptorists. This, then, was the man in whom Dostoevsky recognized his Grand Inquisitor.

Pecherin was not as completely devoid of kindred spirits as he thought. His flight and his conversion to Roman Catholicism fit precisely into the context of the commotion surrounding Pyotr Yakovlevich Chaadaev (1794?–1856). As a teenager Chaadaev had fought against Napoleon and he had been close friends with Pushkin since his time at Tsarskoe Selo. “In Athens he would have been a Pericles, in Rome a Brutus, but here he is a hussar”, Pushkin had written about him in an epigram in 1817.

Shortly after the accession of Nicholas I, this Pericles/Brutus-in-the-bud, who like Pecherin was close to committing suicide at the time, wrote a number of “Philosophical letters”, one of which suddenly appeared in print in the Moscow journal *Teleskop* on 15 October 1836, three months after Pecherin’s departure from Moscow. The letter’s motto was *Adveniat regnum tuum*, “Thy kingdom come”, and was written in a place which the author called Necropolis. Eight of the ten letters of Necropolis coincide with eight of the ten letters forming the Latin name of St Petersburg, Petropolis.<sup>28</sup>

The letter and the reactions which it provoked were the beginning of the debate between the Westerners and the Slavophiles. In Chaadaev’s view there was only one way for Russia to overcome its troubles: Russia would have to seek alliance with true Christianity, the Christianity of the Church of Rome, which at the time—

<sup>27</sup> Cf. M.A. Wes, ‘Crisis and Conversion in Fifth-Century Gaul’, in: John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (eds.), *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?*, Cambridge 1992, p.252–263.

<sup>28</sup> English translation by Valentine Snow in M. Raeff (ed.), *Russian Intellectual History. An Anthology*, 1978, p. 160–173.



that is, from the later Roman Imperial Age—had seen to it that Europe overcame its troubles and worked itself up to the level of its present civilization. Latinism, *latinstvo*, had passed Russia by and this was why everything had gone wrong in Russia. Pecherin himself could not have improved on Chaadaev.

Chaadaev was declared insane by the authorities and subjected to a kind of psychiatric treatment. The *Teleskop* was banned. The inattentive censor, A.V. Boldyrev, who had passed Chaadaev's letter, was discharged from all his functions, including those of professor and rector of the University of Moscow. The editor of *Teleskop* was banished to Siberia. His name is Nikolai Ivanovich Nadezhdin and he was professor in Moscow. He taught Goncharov history of Greek art and put him onto Winckelmann. As a footnote one can add that, thanks to the intervention of Yakov Rostovtsev, Nadezhdin was allowed to return from Siberia a few years later and that in the forties he became the centre of a circle of progressive officials in St Petersburg. Nadezhdin was one of the people who felt no need to wrap themselves in God's mantle and saw greater advantage in inching ahead carefully step by step. He thus belonged to the group of unobtrusively working officials who paved the way for the Great Reforms of the sixties.

In 1837 Chaadaev wrote an apology, in which he accused his critics of narrow-mindedness and tried to demonstrate that he had written nothing but the truth and that he had done so in a spirit of true patriotism—as indeed he had. The title of this work is *Apology of a Madman*. It contains a passionate eulogy on Peter the Great as the first man who took the road to the West and who had thus clearly shown the way to others, even by relinquishing his inherited title in favour of a Western one: *Imperator* Peter the Great, *Pater Patriae*.

Thus 1836 had come to be a crucial year for Chaadaev and Pecherin. It would also be crucial for Pushkin—Uvarov received his "Lucullus" poem and Pushkin prepared to duel with the alleged seducer of his wife. Gogol was on his way to Rome: he left St Petersburg on 6 June 1836. Granovsky had departed a month earlier, heading for Berlin. Two years later, in May 1838, he was followed by Turgenev.

Uniquely among all classic Russian authors, Turgenev seems to have had a period in which he aspired to a university career as

a teacher of philosophy and classical antiquity. This can be inferred from the fact that, after taking his bachelor's degree—for most people the end point of their studies—he prepared to take his master's degree. This involved sitting an exam and a writing a so-called master's dissertation. A master was eligible for an appointment as associate professor. Usually he would in fact be directly appointed to this position. Throughout the nineteenth century there was continual great demand for qualified university teachers.

In St Petersburg Turgenev was in the first place a student of Graefe and his countryman A.A. Fischer, professor of philosophy, who also enjoyed Uvarov's favour. He does not appear to have been a very fanatical student. In January 1837, a year late, he handed in a paper on Homer written in Latin: *De epigrammate Homeri*. In the same month he stared at Pushkin all morning during a concert, Pushkin, who before the end of the month would be fatally wounded in his duel with the adopted French son of the Dutch ambassador in St Petersburg, Baron van Heeckeren. In April he was among the audience at the first night of Gogol's *The Inspector General*, and on 10 July he came into possession of the desired bachelor's certificate.

Another year passed before he departed to Berlin for further studies. This stay was not financed by a government grant, but had to be virtually extorted from his mother (his father had died in 1834). It was the first time that he would travel alone, and this was sufficient reason for his mother to implore divine assistance for him in a solemn farewell service in Kazan Cathedral on Nevsky Prospekt in St Petersburg. On 15 May he embarked on the ferry to Travemünde and Lübeck. In the early morning of 19 May fire broke out on board. At that moment the ship was a mile from the quay of Travemünde. It was a frightening adventure with a reasonably fortunate outcome under the circumstances: eight dead among some 280 passengers. Turgenev arrived in Lübeck shipwrecked and without luggage.

In Berlin he kept up a busy social life. His main German contacts were Bettina von Arnim, Varnhagen von Ense, Felix Mendelssohn, Karl Werder. His main Russian contacts were Granovsky and Stankevich, who thought him somewhat lacking in substance, and Bakunin, who became his room-mate and

whose portrait as a Berlin student—not a very flattering portrait—he painted in the eponymous hero of his novel *Rudin*.

Turgenev attended lectures by Boeckh in Berlin. All that remains are lecture notes: "H.P. Böckh's Vorlesungen über die Griechische Literatur 1838-1839". There are also notes entitled "P-Zumpt's Vorlesungen über Römische Althertümer" and "Zumpt's Vorlesungen über Tacitus Annalen" from 1841. In a letter dated 8 October 1868 Turgenev says that he also counts Ranke, Werder, and Gans among his Berlin teachers and that he studied in Berlin for three semesters all in all. At the end of the summer of 1839 he returned to Russia, early in 1840 he travelled via Vienna to Rome, where on 1 March he climbed the Capitol and saw the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. On 12 April he is in Naples, in July he is back in Berlin. In the summer he travels through Germany, visits Dresden, among other places, and from October 1840 to May 1841 attends more lectures in Berlin. Then he returns home.

He now wants to do his master's examination. This is refused, nobody being present at that moment who can examine him on philosophy. Moreover, he is given to understand that his chances of an appointment at Moscow University are not very favourable. He therefore applies to the Rector of the University of St Petersburg, P.A. Pletnyov, who still remembers Turgenev from earlier days. On 8 April Turgenev appears before the examination committee to be questioned on philosophy. First examiner is Fischer. Turgenev answers all the question "very well". On May 1 Latin follows, with Professor F.K. Freitag as first examiner. Result: "good". On 4 May Greek literature and antiquities, with Graefe as first examiner: Result: "very good". On 10 May Turgenev receives his examination certificate and needs only to submit his dissertation to be able to call himself Master of Arts.

The dissertation was never produced. As a result, Turgenev was thwarted by Uvarov in 1842 and 1843 in his attempts to get a regular position at the Ministry of the Interior. Uvarov told Turgenev that he first had to write his dissertation. In this way Uvarov was probably trying to ensure that the university would not lose Turgenev. But instead of writing a dissertation, Turgenev published a narrative poem *Parasha* (the name recalls the unhappily drowned girl loved by Evgeny, the main character in Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman*). In the same year he encountered the singer

and celebrity Pauline Viardot for the first time. He fell in love at once and would never get over it. Turgenev was lost for science and antiquity.

We can form an exact picture of Turgenev's scholarly expertise during his master's exam. This is not without interest for Turgenev's biography, nor is it without interest for those who want to get an idea of the level of university education in classical antiquity in Russia around 1840. For the master's examination consisted of a written as well as an oral part, and owing to the fact that Turgenev later became a famous writer, the questions *and* Turgenev's answers in this written part have been preserved and published. The questions were put in Latin and had to be answered in Latin too. For Turgenev this was a big problem. He tried his best—and so we have a few bits of Latin, neo-Latin, by the great Turgenev—but at a certain point he was forced to resort to German.

This is not the time or place to reproduce and comment on the complete text of Turgenev's Latin.<sup>29</sup> The questions which he had to answer for philosophy are extremely general: what is the content of philosophy? what is meant by subjective truth? explain the essence of Plato's philosophy. For Latin he had to write down in Latin what the Romans had taken over from the Greeks in the fields of literature and philosophy. For Greek there was just one question—*quid veri historia e poetarum carminibus haurire potest?*: poetry as a source of history. It is here that, halfway through his answer, Turgenev gives up formulating in Latin and switches to German, though not without a somewhat obsequious apology: "Entschuldigen Sie, Herr Professor, diese nicht ganz in der schicklichen Art verfassten Zeilen—wegen der Liebe und Drange zum schönen Alterthume, von dem Ich erfüllt zu sein glaube.—Wünschen Sie aber dennoch dass Ich Lateinisch antworte, so haben Sie nur zu befehlen."

In the final lines of this German part Turgenev mentions "Lieblinge" among the Homeric heroes, who enjoy the gods' particular attention. As an example he names Achilles, who willingly obeys the divine ambassador Iris when she catches him by the hair from behind. Something interesting is going on

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<sup>29</sup> See M.A. Wes, "Toergenjev op weg langs de oudheid" (with reprint of Turgenev's Latin pieces), *Hermeneus* 60 (1988), p. 15-23.

here. Turgenev has made a mistake. It is not Iris, but Pallas Athena (see *Iliad* I 197-198). But this is not so important. The interesting thing is that the formulation which Turgenev uses in his exam answer from 1842 strongly reminds one of the formulation which he used much later, in 1878, when he told Edmond de Goncourt the story of his first sexual experience:<sup>30</sup>

I was very young and a virgin, with the desires which one has at the age of fifteen. My mother had a pretty chambermaid, who looked slightly stupid, but you know, stupidity gives a certain grandeur to some faces. ... It started to rain. I was walking in the garden. Suddenly I saw this girl approaching me. She grasped me—even though I was her master and she was a slave—by the hair at the nape of the neck and said "Come!". What followed was like the sensations which we have all felt. But that sweet grasping of my hair with that one word sometimes comes back to me and the thought of it fills me with happiness.

Karel van het Reve has pointed out that this early memory from 1834 recurs in Turgenev's work, "but completely changed and only recognizable for the expert". He is referring to a scene from *Home of the Gentry* (1859):<sup>31</sup>

Varvara Pavlovna screwed up her velvety eyes and, saying in a low voice: "Yes, you're an artist, too, *un confrère*," added even more quietly: "*Venez!*" and nodded in the direction of the piano. This one casual word: "*Venez!*" instantly, as if by magic, changed Panshin's whole appearance. His preoccupied expression vanished; he smiled, grew animated, undid his coat and, repeating: "What sort of an artist am I, indeed? But you, I hear, are a true artist," followed Varvara Pavlovna to the piano.

Varvara Pavlovna did not, as the stupid girl did with Turgenev, grab Panshin by the hair. The link between the both passages, "recognizable only for the expert", is the word "Come", "*Venez!*". But why, of all examples, does Turgenev in his exam choose Achilles, who is caught by the hair by a goddess? In view of the

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<sup>30</sup> Turgenev to Goncourt: Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *Journal. Mémoires de la vie littéraire*, vol. 2, 1866-1886, ed. by Robert Ricatte, Paris 1956, p. 766 (Jan. 28, 1878).

<sup>31</sup> K. van het Reve, *Geschiedenis van de Russische literatuur*, Amsterdam 1983, p. 283-284. Turgenev in his examination paper: "... und wenn der schon aufbrausende Achill der zu ihn gesandten Iris, die ihn beim Haar von hinten erfasst—willig gehorcht, so ist es überhaupt der auf seine Kraft strotzende Mensch der aber zugleich von einer höhern Gewalt sich Zeugende—welcher uns hier vor die Augen tritt".

deep impression which the incident in 1834 evidently made on the young Turgenev and which had not yet been erased in 1859 or even in 1878, it is natural to assume that the feeling which being caught by the hair at the nape of the neck produced in Turgenev in 1834 still resonates in the passage about Achilles and Iris in the exam of 1842. A divine sensation, and the only trace of Homer in Turgenev's entire oeuvre.

At the very same time that Turgenev decided to turn his back on antiquity and science, Fyodor Buslaev became a teacher at the Third Gymnasium in Moscow. There he taught for six years, from 1842 to 1848. Then he got an appointment at the University of Moscow, first as an adjunct, in 1850 as an associate, and in 1859 as a full professor. He became an authority in the field of Old Russian language, literature, and art. At the request of General Yakov Rostovtsev he wrote his *Historical Grammar of the Russian Language*. This book was meant for the education at the military schools, which were then under Rostovtsev's supervision. The book rendered good services for a very long time and was republished only a few years ago. Buslaev is the first Russian scholar who seriously occupied himself with the manuscript collection of Matthaei's Synodal Library. Unlike Matthaei, however, he devoted all his attention to the Slavonic manuscripts.

His activities as a teacher at the gymnasium did not prevent him from functioning as the assistant to Uvarov's friend Professor Ivan I. Davydov, who was mentioned earlier as the host of Pushkin and Uvarov during their joint visit to the University of Moscow in 1832. In 1839 Buslaev had studied in Leipzig for a year, and from 1839 to 1841 he had spent two years in Italy as the private tutor of the family of his *patronus* Count Stroganov, in whose house he also lived after his return to Moscow.

Back in Moscow, he made renewed contact with two of his former fellow students: Vladislav Ignatievich Klasovsky and Kaetan Andreevich Kossovich. A brief description of the lives of these two may form an interesting counterbalance to the description of similar figures in some Russian novels of the nineteenth century, allowing us to set historical reality against fictional reality.

Klasovsky and Kossovich already knew each other before they became students. For a time they lived together in an old barn in

the countryside of their birthplace, Polotsk in White Russia. Shortly before their departure to Moscow Klasovsky had got into a tremendous panic after being noisily visited one dark night in the attic of their barn (Kossovich slept downstairs) by a hairy creature with horns. He believed that it was the devil in person, but according to the more down-to-earth Kossovich it was simply a stray goat which had fallen through the roof while climbing. An investigation showed that Kossovich was right. Klasovsky always kept silent about the incident, for he liked to be regarded as an atheist. But Kossovich knew better and never took seriously his friend's dismissive attitude towards anything religious. "Anyone who believes in the devil believes in angels too", was his commentary.

In his memoirs, from which all this information derives, Buslaev is profoundly grateful to Klasovsky. Klasovsky became his best friend in Moscow and taught him a great deal. Thus Buslaev tells us that Klasovsky taught him better Latin than anybody else. He, in turn, had learnt the language from an aunt, a Frenchwoman who had gone into retreat in a Russian monastery. Together the two friends read Virgil and Horace in Latin; Guizot, Victor Hugo, and Madame de Staël (on Germany) in French; Mickiewicz in Polish. Klasovsky felt very strongly attracted to his slightly younger friend, and Buslaev does not really understand why. Here follows a fragment from his description of Klasovsky:

Klasovsky was a nervous type—one might even say effeminate, or in any case feminine. He was irritable and at the same time delicately gentle. There was something feminine in his looks too. The fine, almost transparent paleness of his face was instantly suffused by a light blush at the slightest emotion. Even his light brown hair was very thin and brittle. He had unmanageable locks, which jumped and bounced with every movement. They hung over his temples and his large and high forehead like a kind of fringe. These tangled locks, it seemed to me, corresponded to the tangled thoughts which spun around in that restless and impetuous mind. He was of medium height, slender, unusually lively in his movements. A man with a rich inner life. He had enormous powers of attraction, but could also spurn one quite unexpectedly, as one often sees with characters who are more inclined to get excited and to play the role of victim and who are not really capable of taking delight in anything and just quietly enjoying life.

After graduating Klasovsky became a teacher somewhere in the province. Six years later he succeeded in securing a position at the same Moscow gymnasium where Buslaev had just been appointed. Once again they saw each other regularly.

But whereas Buslaev had meanwhile seen something of the world and experienced the joy and stimulation of a thorough introduction to Rome and Naples, Klasovsky had stagnated. "He seems to have shrunk". This was despite the fact that he lived very comfortably, in a kind of guest house for teachers and governesses near the Lubyanka. The house was a low and elongated two-storey stone building. The gentlemen lived downstairs, the ladies upstairs. It was a mixed company, in which barely any Russian was spoken. German, French, and Polish were the languages mainly heard in the "common room". "There was also a piano, so that one could dance".

Klasovsky did not succeed in freeing himself from his provincial suffocation. A suicide attempt failed. The reason for the attempt was never discovered by Buslaev. *Cherchez la femme?* His conjectures could find no other motive. He tried to help his friend and so called in the assistance of his *patronus* Count Stroganov. He managed to get a position for Klasovsky as a private tutor in the family of another count. Thus Klasovsky also travelled to Italy. This did do something to improve his state of mind. He even sent his friend in Moscow a present: a paperweight made of black marble with a picture of St Peter's on it. Later he also sent eighteenth-century Italian caricatures which he had found in an antiquarian bookshop.

Back in Russia Klasovsky, via the system of patronage in which he was now incorporated, became a teacher at the distinguished Corps de Pages in St Petersburg and even private tutor to the children of Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna. As a fruit of his sojourn in Italy he published the first Russian description of Pompeii, illustrated with drawings by his own hand. For those days it was a work of some merit.

The rest of his life was rather colourless. He died at some time in the sixties. Buslaev does not even know exactly when. He does find out from the widow of the deceased that her husband had died a deeply religious Christian and believer in the established doctrines of the Russian Orthodox Church. Buslaev is very pleased with this. He himself in his youth had been annoyed that



Chaadaev had dared to write that Russia had received nothing from "decadent" Byzantium but a corrupt Christianity. And did not Klasovsky hail from a part of the country where traditionally many Roman Catholics lived? But he is also very surprised about Klasovsky's religiousness. After all, when they were young, Klasovsky had always adopted a strictly materialistic position in their philosophical discussions, and in those days this was extremely progressive and therefore suspect. But anyone who believes in the devil believes in angels too, Kossovich had already noted.

Kaetan Kossovich made much more of a name for himself. Detailed accounts of his life were published and he even survived the demolition job carried out by the successive editors of the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia.<sup>32</sup> He can still be found in it, even if the article is a very brief one. He lived from 1815 to 1883 and became a man of great importance in the world of Russian science. For it was he who truly laid the foundations for the study of Oriental languages and cultures. He also played a major role in institutionalizing these studies in a separate faculty, independent of the other language departments, at the University of St Petersburg. Towards the end of his life this small faculty offered an almost complete spectrum of Oriental studies: Egyptian languages and cultures, ancient and modern Near East, Armenia, ancient and modern Persia, and India, Tibet, Mongolia, Manchuria, China, and even Japan. In short: Uvarov's "Académie Asiatique"!

Kossovich was a great pioneer. He was the first to provide Russian translations, with commentaries, of works from Sanskrit and Avestic literature. He has to his name the first edition, with a Latin commentary, of the inscriptions of the ancient Persian empire of the Achaemenids such as had been found up till then. He was responsible for the first volume of the first Sanskrit-Russian dictionary. He was a slightly younger contemporary of the Norwegian Christian Lassen (1800-1876), who, together with A.W. von Schlegel in Germany, had made Indology a full-fledged science and Bonn "the Benares on the Rhine", as it was called in those days. Lassen's four monumental volumes *Indische Althertumskunde* (1844-1862 ; reprinted as recently as 1968) were compulsory reading for Kossovich's students. Kossovich was also

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<sup>32</sup> *Biografichesky Slovar professorov i prepodavatelei Imperatorskago S.-Peterburgskago Universiteta*, vol. 1, St Petersburg 1896, p. 346-354 (S. Oldenburg).

thoroughly acquainted with the work of British Orientalists such as James Prinsep and John Fergusson.

All this commands even more admiration when one realizes that Kossovich, the son of a village priest in Polotsk, was first sent back to the province as a teacher in 1839 after studying Greek and Latin in Moscow. For four and half years he taught at the gymnasium in Tver (on the upper course of the Volga, about 200 miles northwest of Moscow). Then he could become a teacher at a gymnasium in Moscow, and only from 1845 a teacher of Oriental languages at the Lazarev Institute in Moscow (a private institution financed by a wealthy Armenian). He must have acquired his knowledge of these languages mainly through self-tuition in the province. At what effort? "And at what cost?", Goncharov might have asked.

Buslaev describes Kossovich in his memoirs as a gentle man who was always extremely friendly and helpful to everybody. He got married when he was almost sixty, which would not be remarkable in itself, were it not that his wife was Arabian. The bridegroom thought this rather convenient on account of the language, writes Buslaev.

As a student Kossovich could always be found reading. He was always reading, and it was always Greek or Latin, one folio after the other. At the University of St Petersburg he also taught Greek. In 1843 he had, after all, prepared a Russian edition of the Greek grammar of the legendary Raphaël Kühner (the "elementary version" from 1837).

Kossovich also presided over the birth of the "official" Greek-Russian dictionary. This enterprise, like everything in the field of Oriental languages, had been launched under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, so by order of Uvarov. The first instalments were published in 1848.

1848 was a year of revolution in Europe. Barricades and banners in Paris, Rome, Milan, Venice, Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Dresden, Berlin. The pope was put to flight, and the king of France was forced to abdicate, like the emperor of the Habsburg Empire. Mazzini restored the Roman Republic. There was panic in St Petersburg.

"The revolution of the intellectuals", wrote Lewis Namier (a Polish historian) almost a century later. Nicholas I resolved to

stand firm, as the Russian intellectuals in the years 1848-1855 found to their cost. Control over the universities was drastically tightened. Philosophy and history of philosophy could now only be taught by representatives of the church. Fischer—Turgenev's professor of philosophy—went to complain to the new minister of education. Uvarov had already been discharged. The new minister countered that "the usefulness of philosophy has not been demonstrated; that, by contrast, philosophy *can* be harmful is an established fact". Ideas were treated like "thieves and drunkards at a police station".<sup>33</sup> Continuation of one's studies abroad was prohibited. An iron curtain was to shield Russia from Germany and the rest of Europe.

The laborious process of a hundred and fifty years of enlightenment virtually ground to a halt. The czar was seriously planning to abolish all the universities in Russia, and he was not the only one to think along these lines. In the end it was decreed that the number of students not on a grant was not to exceed three hundred per university. In practice this meant that no first-year students could be enrolled as long as the number of students already enrolled was still in excess of the permissible maximum of three hundred. Only the medical faculty was exempted from this rule. Of course, many now hit on the expedient of enrolling as medical students, only to switch to a different faculty once they had been registered, until this escape route was also blocked off. Even the extremely nationalistic and anything but liberal historian Mikhail Pogodin—professor of Russian history in Moscow—complained that Russia was being smothered in "the quiet of a graveyard, rotting and stinking, both physically and morally".<sup>34</sup>

The panic in St Petersburg also had an effect on the system of classical education set up by Uvarov. The czar had always been sceptical about the point of teaching Greek and even before 1848 his suspicions on this score had been confirmed. For in 1847 an impecunious student at the University of Kiev had informed the authorities about the existence of the secret Society of the Saints Cyrilus and Methodius. The informer hoped for a generous

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted from Nikitenko's diary (see note 10); cf. also C.H. Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education: an Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786-1855*, DeKalb 1984, p. 220-237.

<sup>34</sup> See N.V. Riasanovsky, *A Parting of the Ways. Government and the Educated Public in Russia 1801-1855*, Oxford 1976, p. 144.

financial reward. An investigation was carried out and documents were seized. The content of these documents reminds one of the tradition of Ernst Groddeck and his Gottingen teacher Christian Gottlob Heyne. The members of the society aimed at realizing a society of freedom, equality, and fraternity and a political system of democracy and federalism by peaceful means through education and the dissemination of literature. The United States of America and the ancient Greek city states were their shining examples.<sup>35</sup> As the reference to the names of Cyrillus and Methodius already suggests, the society was by no means an exponent of Polish nationalism and Roman Catholicism. Its trend of thought was based on Slavonic orthodoxy and Ukrainian nationalism, all in a very moderate, not to say naive, form.

Everything to do with Greek was now closely watched in St Petersburg. Censorship assumed absurd proportions. According to Nikitenko, there were more censors in 1850 than the whole year's yield of published books. Even Aleksandr Sergeevich Uvarov, the son of the once almighty minister, found himself in trouble with the censors. Aleksandr Uvarov was a respected and learned archaeologist. He particularly occupied himself with the material remains of Southern Russia and the Greek colonies along the north coast of the Black Sea. He had also found Greek inscriptions there, and in 1851 he wished to publish these with a translation of the Greek. A censor objected: Uvarov had translated the Greek word *demos*, "people", as "people". But this word was taboo. He had to change it to "citizens".

Obscurantism was rife. Conservative advisers reminded the czar that Greek and Latin were languages of republican city states and that the Parisian revolutionaries of 1789 had already idolized Greek and Roman heroes of freedom. The nationalists among these advisers thought the gymnasium too German and Minister Uvarov both too German and too French. Uvarov was suspected of secretly harbouring liberal ideas, since he had dared to write words in praise of Socrates, Brutus, and Cato in a French essay, while at the same time an assiduous censor in St Petersburg was busy erasing the names of all these ancient freedom-fighters from the textbooks and replacing the word "assassinated" for those

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<sup>35</sup> Whittaker, p. 214-215.

Roman emperors who really had been assassinated by the word "died".

Uvarov did his utmost to turn the tide by cataloguing, in an article attributed to Ivan Davydov in the *Sovremennik* ("The Contemporary") of March 1849, the merits and achievements of the threatened universities of Moscow and Kiev with an impressive display of names and numbers, and this did in fact have a favourable effect, as Nikitenko noted in his diary, even if the minister was called to account for it and from now on nothing was allowed to be published on this subject without special permission from the authorities. But the universities were not closed.

Besides being a plea for the universities, Uvarov's article in the *Sovremennik* is also a plea for the value of classical education.<sup>36</sup> The opponents of this education had pointed to the evil influence of Graeco-Roman ideas on the leaders of the French Revolution. Uvarov had countered them by pointing out that in actual fact these leaders had understood nothing of those ideas and that they had simply projected their own ideals back onto antiquity: "Robespierre and Marat were far from being learned Latin scholars", he notes, and he goes on to say that there is nothing in Homer, Pindar, Greek tragedy, Demosthenes, Virgil, and Cicero that can be used by atheists and anarchists. "In the work of these authors one will look in vain for lessons in bloodshed." Sure enough, there were Catilines and Gracchi in antiquity. "But they now belong to the domain of history. Will it really be able to omit these monsters from its annals? No, history tells of Nero and Caligula as well as of Marcus Aurelius and Trajan. For that matter, who among the ancient authors can be compared, for the lowering of human dignity, with the modern Frenchmen and Germans who are now to be set in the place of the Greek and Latin classics? What poison is more lethal than that which Victor Hugo and David Friedrich Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach offer us in their gilded poisoned cups? But surely nobody even contemplates banning French and German from the schools for this reason?"

Next, Uvarov formulates his pedagogical ideal. This ideal is based on two requirements. The first requirement is that one should not thwart a single innate tendency in young minds, that

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<sup>36</sup> 'Onaznachenii russkikh universitetov i uchastii ikh v obshchestvennom obrazovanii', *Sovremennik* 14, No. 3 (March 1849), p. 37-46.

not one of all the talents which are necessary for the sound performance of the whole organism should be frustrated. The second requirement is essentially the same as the first: one should resist the tendency towards one-sidedness, one should devote oneself to the gradual and combined development of the whole human being. He then concludes that there are all kinds of systems of education and training in which attention is paid to certain aspects of the human mind, but that there is only one system which takes man himself as the object of its inquiry, and this is the system of the historico-philological sciences, the basis of which is knowledge of the classics.

The czar was not impressed by the arguments of his minister. Until the very last Uvarov tried to salvage what he could, but it was finally Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, the patroness of Nikolai Pirogov too and his supporter in hard times, who made it clear to Uvarov that staying on was pointless. On 20 October 1849 Uvarov handed in his resignation. In this way he could at least feel that he had taken the honourable way out. By then Greek had already been demoted to a subject that was only compulsory for pupils who were planning to study classical literature. In 1848 the total number of gymnasium pupils was approximately twenty thousand. More than half of these attended gymnasia where Greek was taught. This had now come to an end.

A few years later, when the czar went through the education budget for 1852, he dropped the item for Greek lessons altogether. This gave rise to some cautious objections: was there not a strong ethnical minority of Greeks in Southern Russia? The result of these objections was that Greek was allowed to be taught at nine gymnasia in 1854. The reading programme was drastically altered: for Greek—insofar as it was still taught—the attention of the pupils was focused on authors like Eusebius, Basil, and John Chrysostom; for Latin on authors like Clement of Rome, Cyprian, Tertullian, Lactantius, and Augustine. All were good Christians and Church Fathers. Homer and Horace were removed from the curriculum. The organization was in chaos.

In the long run the article by Uvarov/Davydov in the *Souremennik* of March 1849 was very influential. It forms the beginning of a long debate in Russia between the defenders of the humanities and the traditional gymnasium and the supporters of an education that was more geared to “reality” or “social needs” and

of the type of school which became known in Germany as the *Realschule*. The "classicists" survived the diatribes of the obscurantists of 1849. Indeed, in the last decades of the nineteenth century they would score great triumphs. But triumphs often lead to dissension, quarreling, and triumphalist conservatism. It was thus that they came to be mown down in the dark years of 1917-1920.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE LOST PAST OF NIKOLAI GOGOL

In 1847 the last book appeared which Gogol published during his life, *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*.<sup>1</sup> The book contains thirty-two essays, varying in length from two or three pages to fifteen or twenty pages. The essay "On the Essence of Russian Poetry and On Its Originality" numbers about fifty pages and is thus exceptionally long. The reader is informed about a wide variety of subjects: "The Meaning of Sickness", via a discussion of the theatre, to an exposition on the question "What a Wife Can Do for Her Husband in Simple Domestic Matters, as Things Now Are in Russia". Gogol's answer to this question is that she can be frugal, pray often, see to it that her husband continues to serve his country, and remind him continually that he is the master of the house. All this is meant as serious and virtuous instruction.

Gogol himself called his *Selected Passages* "my first book that serves a purpose".<sup>2</sup> What purpose it served is made clear *e contrario* by the furious letter which Vissarion Belinsky, already critically ill, wrote to Gogol on 15 June 1847 and which since then, more than any other document, has gained the status of a kind of Holy Writ of Russia's Western intelligentsia with its Mannheimian utopian views. Belinsky's letter is uncommonly spirited and moving and shows profound social sympathy. It is the letter of a man who feels deeply betrayed. Belinsky accuses Gogol of invoking the church and the whip to proclaim the mendacity and complete lack of ethical awareness in Russian society to be in fact truth and virtue. What follows is a collage of fragments from this letter:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> N.V. Gogol, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, pod obshchei redaktsiei S.I. Mashinskogo, N.L. Stepanova, M.B. Khrapchenko, Moscow 1966-1967, vol. 6.

<sup>2</sup> R.-D. Keil, *Nikolai W. Gogol, mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*, Reinbek 1985, p. 110-111.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, ed. by Henry Hardy and Aileen Kelly, London 1978, p. 172-173; complete translation by Valentine Snow in: M. Raeff (ed.), *Russian Intellectual History: an Anthology*, 1978, p. 253-261.



Yes, I loved you, with all the passion with which a man, tied by ties of blood to his country loves its hope, its glory, its pride, one of its great leaders along the path of consciousness, development and progress ... Russia sees her salvation not in mysticism, or aestheticism, or piety, but in the achievements of education, civilisation, and humane culture. She has no need of sermons (she has heard too many), nor of prayers (she has mumbled them too often), but of the awakening in the people of a feeling of human dignity, lost for so many ages in mud and filth. It needs laws and rights in accordance not with the teachings of the church, but with those of common sense and justice ... Instead of which she offers the terrible spectacle of a land where men buy and sell other men without even the cant of the Americans, who say that negroes are not men ... a country where there are no guarantees of personal liberty or honour or property; not even a police state, only huge corporations of official thieves and robbers ... The government ... knows well what the landlords do to their peasants, and how many landlords are massacred by their serfs every year ... Preacher of the whip, apostle of ignorance, champion of obscurantism and black reaction, defender of a Tartar way of life—what are you doing? Look at the ground beneath your feet. You are standing on the edge of an abyss. You found your teachings upon the Orthodox Church, and that I understand, for the Church has always favoured whips and prisons, and it has always grovelled to despotism. But what has this to do with Christ? ... Of course a Voltaire whose ridicule put out the flames of fanaticism and illiteracy in Europe is far more a son of Christ, flesh of His flesh, than all your parsons, bishops, patriarchs, metropolitans ... Our country priests are the heroes of rude, popular tales ... the priest is always the glutton, the miser, the sycophant, the man lost to all sense of shame ... Most of our clergy are ... either pedantic schoolmen, or else appallingly ignorant and blind. Only our literature, in spite of a barbarous censorship, shows signs of life and forward movement. That is why the calling of a writer is so honoured among us, why even a small literary gift makes for success; that is why the profession of letters has thrown into the shade the glitter of epaulettes and gaudy uniforms; that is why a liberal writer, even one whose capacity is poor, excites general attention, while great poets who ... sell their gifts to serve the Orthodox Church, autocracy and nationalism, quickly lose their popularity ... The Russian people is right. It sees in writers of Russia its only leaders, defenders, and saviours from the darkness of Russian autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationalism. It can forgive a bad book but not a harmful one.

The charge in this quotation that Gogol had sold his talents to the trinity of "autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationalism" is a reference to information leaked shortly before by Uvarov, generally regarded as the apostle of this trinity. The journalist Ivan Panaev

had recently revealed that Gogol had written a letter of thanks to Uvarov for the annuity of two thousand roubles which the minister had granted him for the years 1845-1847. In this letter Gogol had announced that he would soon publish a new book, in which he would dissociate himself from his past failures and which in content would entirely accord with the minister's own views. The new book can only be the *Selected Passages*. This is not to say that Uvarov deliberately bribed Gogol, or that Gogol allowed himself to be bribed. Gogol simply believed in what he wrote in *Selected Passages*.

Precisely what perfidious things he wrote in *Selected Passages* are usually left unmentioned in the discussion. Hence I will again offer a long fragment, from number 22, "A Russian Landowner".<sup>4</sup> One of Gogol's friends has decided to withdraw to his country estate. Gogol advises him on how to make his peasants loyal and how to exhort them to work hard and be grateful:

First of all, gather the peasants together and explain to them what you are and what they are. That you are a landowner over them not because you wanted to command and be a landowner, but because you are already a landowner, because you were born a landowner, because God will make you answer if you should change this rank for another, because everyone must serve God in his place and not in another's, just as they who were born under a power must submit to that power under which they were born, because there is no power which is not from God. Show them this in the Gospels, so that they may see it, every one. Then tell them that you are compelling them to labor and work not because you need money for your pleasures—and as evidence then and there before them deplore currency, so that they may really see that money is nothing to you,—but that you are compelling them to labor because it has been commanded by God that man must earn his bread in the sweat of his brow, and then read them a lesson in the Holy Writ, so that they may see it. Tell them the whole truth: that God will make you answer for the last scoundrel in the village, and that therefore you will take still more care that they work honestly, not only for you but for themselves, for you know, and, indeed, they know that the peasant, once having become lazy, is capable of anything—he becomes a thief and a drunkard, he ruins his soul, and he makes you render the account to God. And everything that you tell them, then and there confirm by the words of Holy Writ; with your finger show them each letter as it

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<sup>4</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 6, p. 316-323. Translation: Nikolai Gogol, *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*, translated by Jesse Zeldin, Nashville 1969, p. 137-144 (referred to as Zeldin).

is written down; compel each one to cross himself before it, to bow down and kiss the book in which it is written. In short, let them see clearly that everything that concerns them you will consider with God's will, not with any kind of European or other fancy. The peasant will bear it in mind; he does not need a great number of words. Declare the whole truth to him: that the soul of a man is the dearest thing in the world, and that you will look after it above all, so that no one may ruin his soul and hand it over to eternal torment. When you reproach and reprimand anyone caught in thieving, idleness, or drunkenness, place him before the face of God and not before your face; show him that he sins against God and not against you. And do not reproach him alone but summon his wife, his family, assemble the neighbors. Reproach the wife because she has not driven her husband away from evil and has not threatened him with the fear of God; reproach his neighbors because they have allowed their brother to live like a dog in their midst and, through that, ruin his soul; prove to them that they will all give an answer to God for that. Arrange it so that the responsibility may lie on everyone and so that everyone who environs the man may be reproached and he not be too much undone. Give the strength of authority and responsibility to the model managers and better peasants. Shake them up, so that subsequently they may not only live well themselves but so that they may teach others the good life, so that drunkard may not teach drunkard, so that this may be their duty. Assemble the scoundrels and drunkards, so that they may be shown who is to be esteemed, be it the elder, the steward, the priest, or, indeed, you; so that, when they catch sight of the model peasant and manager from afar, all the peasants' caps may fly from their heads and they may all make way for him; but whoever makes bold to show him some disrespect or does not listen to his sensible words, give a good scolding in front of everyone; say to him: "You, you unwashed bum! You have always lived in such grime that your eyes no longer see, you don't want to render honor to the honest! Down on your knees and beg that he bring you to reason; he who does not call on reason dies like a dog." After having called the model peasants to yourself and, if they are old, having seated them before you, have a little talk with them about how they can edify others and teach the good to them, fulfilling it in just that way that God has commanded us. Act so for the course of one year only and you will see how everything will come into harmony; because of this even your property will become better. Only take care of the chief thing, and all the rest will come creeping along by itself. Not for nothing did Christ say, "Greater glory shall be given to them." This truth is seen still more in the Christian life than in ours; among them the rich landlord and the good man are synonyms. And in whatever village the Christian life alone has visited, the peasants mine silver with spades.

This fragment accounts for about a third of the whole essay. It is offensive to secularized Westerners and it would be easy to make the matter even more offensive by carefully selecting isolated quotations. But this will not contribute to a better understanding. We need to view the whole, we need to see what Gogol envisaged as the ideal country estate and the ideal society when he wrote the essay. This ideal is that of the perfect society according to the model of the perfect pyramid. The landowner is the perfect patriarch and good shepherd. The *patronus* and *clientes*, the patron and his clients, the *dominus* and *famuli*, the master and his servants, are united by a close tie of *fides*, mutual trust, and *caritas*, mutual love and affection. This trust and this love are continually reaffirmed through benefactions, *beneficia*, from the top downwards, and *officia*, acts of service, from the bottom upwards. This is the Russia which Gogol dreamt of. It is not materially different, as an ideal, from the ideal company of which business economists dream.

This ideal already existed in antiquity. One might call it Arcadian. Or Platonic. Or even Homeric. It is also the society which forms the Sicilian or Spanish or medieval backdrop to *Cavelleria Rusticana*, *Carmen*, and the *Carmina Burana*. Now a frequent problem in antiquity was that it was not quite clear by whom and how the man at the top of the pyramid could be kept under control. With the breakthrough of Christianity, however, this problem was solved in theory: it was impressed upon the landowner, the earthly *patronus/dominus*, that he too would one day have to render account to the super-*Patronus*, the super-*Dominus*, of the great super-pyramid of heaven and earth, who would one day pronounce the Last Judgement. This prospect would have to prevent the landowner from abusing his power and arbitrarily beating up the peasant whom God had entrusted to him. Gogol therefore advises: "Do not beat the peasant. ... But know how to get hold of him properly with a word; you are a master of the apt word. Criticize him in front of all the people, but in such a way that all the people may laugh at him; a bit of this will be more useful to him than all the cuffs and slaps".

Education is unnecessary:

To teach the peasant reading and writing so that he may attain to the possibility of reading the vapid booklets which European philanthropists publish for the people is really nonsense. Mainly

because the peasant has no time for it. After so much work, no booklet will creep into his brain; after returning home dead tired, he will fall into a sound sleep. You yourself will do the same when you engage in work more often. The village priest can much more truly say what is needful to the peasant than all these booklets. If there be one in whom a desire for reading and writing has really been engendered, not for the end of being a swindling clerk, but in order to read the books in which the law of God for man is inscribed—that is another matter. Educate him like your son and for him alone use everything that you would use for an entire school. Our people is not stupid; it runs, as from the devil, from all documents. It knows that there lurk all human confusions, chicaneries, and intrigues. For the present it ought not to know that there are any other books than the holy ones.

It goes without saying that the priest plays a key role in the ideal society envisaged by Gogol. It is therefore vital, he believes, that the landowner leaves nothing to chance in this matter and ensures that the priest does not adopt too tolerant an attitude towards the peasants and does not get too friendly with them:

Meanwhile, he will gain more respect from the peasants when they see him walking arm in arm with you. Act so that he stand in no need of a home, so that he be provided with everything in his own household, and therefore have the possibility of being with you constantly. Believe me, he finally would be so accustomed to you that it would be lonely for him without you. Having become accustomed to you, he will insensibly accumulate a knowledge of both things and men from you, and a great deal of good, because in you, glory to God, there is a sufficiency of it all, you know how to express yourself so clearly and well that each person willy-nilly adopts not only your thoughts but even the form of their expression and your words themselves.

Gogol has something more to say about the practical question of how the landowner can best prepare the priest for his task as a preacher:

Have you thought of how difficult it is to deliver an intelligent sermon, especially to the peasant? ... I give you the same advice as the advice which I gave someone else, which it seems he has already profited by. Take up the Holy Fathers, and especially St. John Chrysostom. ... It is entirely possible to deliver a passage out of his sermons to our peasant, and he will understand. Take up Chrysostom and read him together with your priest, with a pencil in your hand in order to mark all such passages; there are tens of such passages in every one of Chrysostom's sermons. ... They need not be long: a page or even half a page—the shorter the better. But the priest, before pronouncing them to the people, must read

them through several times together with you, in order to pronounce them not only with animation but in a persuasive voice, as though he were petitioning for his own advantage, on which the welfare of his life depends. You will see that this will be more effective than his own sermons.

Then again, there should not be too much preaching, Gogol believes. The people only get used to it, and in that case they will become like the highest circles, "those who go to listen to famous European preachers in the same way that they go to an opera or a spectacle". He even knows the case of a priest who never preached at all. But this man knew his peasants like the back of his hand and was aware of everything and simply waited until they came to him for confession. Then he would deal so roughly with the good-for-nothing drunkards, four or five at a time, that they would slink out of the church with their tails between their legs and for two months nobody would even dare to come close to the tavern.

Not knowing Gogol, but knowing some sermons by late Roman Church Fathers, one might think that the fragments just quoted were written in the fourth century. The repeated references to John Chrysostom (347-407) suggest that Gogol knew his sermons. This is more than likely. Slavonic translations of Greek Church Fathers, especially of John Chrysostom, had already been circulating since the tenth century. A large collection of sermons by John Chrysostom was also translated in the twelfth century. In turn, excerpts from these were incorporated in an anthology which is known as the *Zlatostrui*. This literally means "River of gold". The word derives from the sobriquet Chrysostom—"with the golden mouth". The *Zlatostrui* is ordered according to the Russian Orthodox calendar and so was used the whole year through by the clergy. It has been calculated that more than 300 works by John Chrysostom were translated into Russian or Slavonic. One can add that at the beginning of the sixteenth century Maksim Grek, whom I mentioned in chapter I, published many works by John Chrysostom in improved versions and that particularly his translations of the sermons contributed substantially to the training of Russian priests until well into the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> This is also an aspect of the reception of the ancient heritage bequeathed by antiquity.

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<sup>5</sup> See F.J. Thomson, *Slavica Gandensia* 5 (1978), p. 107-139; A. Langelier, *Maksim Grek*, Amsterdam 1986.

But it is quite a different aspect from the eighteenth-century reception of Horace and co. Again one sees that each society adopts only that from antiquity which is useful for that society. In Russia prior to Peter the Great the sermons of John Chrysostom and other Greek Church Fathers were more useful than Homer's epics. And in Russia after Peter the Great the interest in pagan classical antiquity could become no more than a superficial phenomenon, which occasionally showed signs of being an oppositional phenomenon.

To bring out the similarity between Gogol's advice to his friend the landowner and late Roman texts of the same kind, I give an excerpt from a sermon in which, some fifteen hundred years earlier, John Chrysostom explains to an audience evidently consisting of landowners why it is good for landowners to use the services of the church to help them manage their businesses properly. The only difference is that, whereas village priests and parish churches were ubiquitous in nineteenth-century Russia, Chrysostom still had to convince his audience that priests and churches are a useful investment and that they should therefore be introduced:<sup>6</sup>

Many possess villages and country estates, but they do not concern themselves about them. ... They are only interested in seeing profits rise ..., but nobody realizes that people's spirits need to be cultivated, just as farmland does. If you see thistles and thorns on the land, you prune and burn them away, so that they cannot do any damage. But when you see that the peasants themselves are full of thorns and thistles, you do not prune them away. ... Would it not be a good thing if you were to build a church on your estate, and employ a priest? ... Do not say: "There is a church nearby at the neighbours' place; it is too expensive for me and yields no profit". If you spend money on the poor, spend it rather on this. Pay the expenses of a priest and a deacon ... It will give you a good reputation. What advantages will you not reap? You will be praised and God will accept from you the first-fruits of the harvest. And it is useful for keeping the peasants peaceful. They will stand in awe of the priest and your estate will become safer. ... Do not let yourself be put off by the investment, but consider rather the return: *they* cultivate the land, *you* cultivate their souls. ... Bathhouses and taverns, these you do provide, and they only make the peasants fond of luxury and voluptuousness. ... How different would it be if there were a church, with everything that belongs to it. *That* is a

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<sup>6</sup> Johannes Chrysostomus, *Homilia in Acta Apostolorum* 18, 4-5, in: Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 60, p. 146-148.

fortress, *that* makes for safety on the land. ... If there is quiet on your estate without a church, it is only because no work is done. But if there is a church on your estate, it will resemble God's paradise. There will be no shouting, no unrest, there will be no divisive enmities, nor deviant opinions: all are friends. Owing to this peace you will be able to devote yourself to philosophy; the priest will keep everything under control through his presence and supervision.

Especially in the final years of his life—which lasted from 1809 to 1852—Gogol gave serious thought to the question of how he, as a writer, could help to improve the (Russian) world. He had concluded that it was pointless and even counterproductive to expose the defects of Russian society through satire and parody, as he had done before. Hence he came to believe in this final period that his *Dead Souls* and *The Inspector General* had not only been written for nothing, but had even had a harmful and undermining effect. That kind of writing could only be an obstacle on the road which Russia had to take: the road back to the lost past, when everybody still lived in fear of God and obeyed God's commandments. This is the lost past of the perfect pyramid, with at the top an All-seeing and Almighty Father, Strict but Just. It has often been remarked in more psychologizing discussions of Gogol that he himself spent his whole life searching for a father figure. At the same time reference is made to his abnormally strong and problematic ties with his mother.

The devastating criticism which enlightened intellectuals levelled against *Selected Passages* took Gogol by complete surprise and threw him into confusion. The publication had been carefully prepared and was mainly intended to remove a psychological block, so that he could finally get on with his plans to write parts two and three of *Dead Souls*. These parts (according to late Gogol) would have to compensate the negative effect of the only part which we now have complete.

One of the figures to whom Gogol regularly went for advice during the selection and preparation of *Selected Passages* was Vasily Andreevich Zhukovsky. Zhukovsky was regarded by those who knew him as the perfect embodiment of the Goethean "beautiful soul". Gogol became acquainted with Zhukovsky as early as 1830 and owed a great deal to him, not only in the way of advice and assistance in literary matters, but also in the sphere of financial and material support. Earlier on in this book I already



mentioned that Zhukovsky made a highly acclaimed Russian translation of Homer's *Odyssey* in the forties. Gogol must have been in a position to follow the making of this translation at close quarters. Not surprisingly, therefore, one of the essays in *Selected Passages* is devoted to a discussion of this translation and the importance which Gogol believed it had for Russia: Letter vii, "On *The Odyssey* Translated by Zhukovsky".<sup>7</sup>

Anyone who, like Gogol in the forties, holds that all his previous written work is a failure because it cannot serve as a guide on the road back towards the recovery of the lost past of the patriarchal golden age, has just two options: either he stops writing—rather, he cannot write any longer because he is completely blocked—or he tries to show the way by writing in a different manner. Anyone who chooses the latter option aspires, in effect, to the position of a redeemer. He assumes the mantle of God. This is what Gogol did. A few years later he believed that this move had been a failure. And so, from his point of view, it is wholly understandable—so far as such matters can be rationally understood—that in the night of 11 February 1852 he arranged his papers, took out Pushkin's letters, and threw the rest—the sequel to *Dead Souls*—into the burning stove. Ten days later he was dead.

Gogol believed that what he had intended to achieve with his complete trilogy of *Dead Souls*—a trilogy modelled on Dante's *Divina Commedia*: Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso—would be brought about by Zhukovsky's translation of the *Odyssey*. His discussion of this translation and of Homer in his *Selected Passages* is written against the same mental and theoretical background as his exposition on the ideal Russian landowner and all the other pieces in the volume, which had received so much criticism and which to this very day have led critics to conclude that Gogol had been seized by a pathological religious phobia. One may find his train of thought naive and even tragic or repugnant, but he had not lost his wits. The arguments in "A Russian Landowner" are logically altogether consistent. To observe this is by no means to imply that one subscribes to the starting-point of these arguments, the belief in the ideal patriarchal society.

But what exactly does Gogol have to say about Zhukovsky's *Odyssey*? He starts by extolling the *Odyssey* as "the most perfect

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<sup>7</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 6, p. 224-233; Zeldin, p. 32-33, 36, 39-40, 41.

work of all the centuries". It is also a work of vast scope, in comparison with which the *Iliad* describes no more than a single episode.

The *Odyssey* takes in the entire ancient world, both public and domestic life, all the vocations of the people of that time, their trades, their knowledge, their beliefs ... in short, it is difficult to say what the *Odyssey* does not take in or what is left out of it. For many centuries it served as an inexhaustible well for ancient, and afterwards for all, poets. Subjects for innumerable tragedies and comedies have been drawn from it. All that was spread throughout the world, became a common heritage, and the *Odyssey* itself was forgotten.

The fate of the *Odyssey* was strange: in Europe they did not value it.

Gogol advances three causes for this: (1) there was not a good translator capable of reproducing the work in an artistically perfect form; (2) there was not a rich enough language which could adequately represent Homer's splendid Greek; and, finally, (3) there was not a people gifted with the same pureness and innocence as the Greeks, "which is necessary for Homer to be appreciated". From what follows we find out that Gogol attaches most importance to this final cause and that he takes the Greeks to have been pure and innocent in an ethical sense.

According to Gogol, Zhukovsky does fulfil the necessary requirements and he considers Russian, as a language, to be "the fullest and richest of all European languages". He believes that Zhukovsky is such an ideal translator because, after long years of preparation and practice, he has succeeded in raising his soul to a state of supreme harmony and perfect balance. Without this harmony and balance Zhukovsky would never have been able to do his work so well. "Finally, it was necessary for him to become a more profound Christian, in order to acquire that enlightened, profound attitude towards life which none but a Christian (who automatically comprehends the meaning of life) may have".

Clearly, Gogol has recognized those qualities in Zhukovsky—or projected them onto him—which he missed so painfully when he looked at *himself*: harmony, balance, inner depth, the attitude of the true Christian. "True art creates harmony and order in the soul, the opposite of disorder and confusion", he wrote on 10 January 1848 in a letter to Zhukovsky. To achieve this effect the artist should confront his readers with virtuous heroes who give

consolation. For the sequel to *Dead Souls* part I—his Inferno—he needed such heroes. “They are not invented by the mind. As long as you still somewhat resemble them, as long as you have not acquired constancy and firmly established some good qualities in your soul—all that your pen writes will be a dead thing, as far from truth as earth is from Heaven. As for inventing nightmares, I have not invented any either; these nightmares weigh on my soul: what was in my soul is what issued forth from it”. (1843, in *Selected Passages*, no. 18, 3)<sup>8</sup>

According to Gogol, Zhukovsky’s *Odyssey*—in tragic contrast to *Dead Souls* II and III, with their intended cathartic effect—appeared at exactly the right time, and he predicts that the work will therefore make a profound impact, both on the Russian public at large and on each individual reader. The arguments which he puts forward to support this prediction tell us less about the nature of the *Odyssey* than about the nature and effect of what Gogol was hoping to achieve with his completed *Dead Souls*.

Everyone who knows the work will agree that the *Odyssey*, with its mixed nature of fairy-tale and picaresque novel, offers entertainment for people of every station in life (“even an illiterate person”). But one starts to wonder when Gogol immediately adds that this is so important because the *Odyssey* is at the same time a poem of the highest *ethical* value and that Homer wrote it *solely* to show the people of his time the laws governing their actions. That reading Homer influences the development of ethical awareness and contributes to better language, that it wholly quenches the thirst for knowledge of antiquity, and that all this enriches the mind, has been argued at length by countless critics and in this regard Gogol’s discussion does not differ from so many others.

But as soon as Gogol starts to expound his views on the *social* relevance of the *Odyssey*, many people may well be put off. It is precisely here, says Gogol, that Homer wished

to remind man that there is something better and holier in him, which he is always liable to forget, to leave to every person an example of his profession in each of his characters, and to leave to all in general an example in his tireless Odysseus of the profession of man in general.

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<sup>8</sup> *Selected Passages*, No. 18, 3, in: *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 6, p. 289-290; Zeldin, p. 108.

The stern respect for customs, the reverential esteem for power and superiors, ... the virginal modesty of his young people, the benevolence and the good humor of the old people, the cordial hospitality, the respect, almost reverence, for man, in so far as he shows forth the image of God, the belief that ... he can do nothing by his own means—in short, everything, every least detail in the *Odyssey* speaks of the inmost desire of the poet of poets to leave to the men of antiquity a living and complete book infused by law ....

Gogol is firmly convinced that Zhukovsky's *Odyssey* will have a profound effect on the Russian society of his time and of the future.

Precisely at the present time, when, by a mysterious decree of Providence, everywhere is heard an unhealthy murmur of dissatisfaction, the voice of human displeasure with everything that exists in the world: against the order of things, against the time, against oneself. When one finally begins to become suspicious of the perfection to which the latest constitution and public education have led us; when one perceives in everyone a kind of uncontrollable thirst to be something other than what he is ... ; when through the absurd clamor and the thoughtless propagation of new but dimly perceived ideas one perceives a kind of general attempt to be closer to a mean, to find the real law of our actions ...—in short, it is precisely at this time that the *Odyssey* strikes with the majesty of the patriarchal, ancient mode of life, with the freshness of life, with the clarity of man's childhood. In the *Odyssey*, our nineteenth century will hear a strong reproach, and the reproaches will go on the more it is scrutinized and carefully read.

How many more, Gogol cries out passionately in his peroration, how many more means and possibilities do we not have of increasing our humanity, in comparison with those people in the past! We possess the experience of centuries, hoards of erudition, a religion which has been revealed to us for the very purpose that we may become saints and heavenly creatures, and what have we done with this wealth of possibilities? Amongst ourselves and in ourselves we see only confusion and chaos, "we have succeeded in making ourselves into scraps, into petty creatures, from head to very clothes, and in addition to all that, we so loathe one another that no one respects anyone, not even excepting those who speak of the respect due to all". But if only we all read the *Odyssey*, it will turn out all right and we will be cured of our "so-called European 'perfection'".

This train of thought, for all its late-Gogolian peculiarity, is not something that one finds in Gogol alone, even if it finds its baldest

expression in him. There can be no doubt that his view enjoyed widespread currency. It crystallized into the idea that the teaching of Latin and Greek, in accordance with existing hierarchical social relations regarded in principle as good and desirable, should be entirely devoted to the prevention of change and emancipation in whatever form. Instruction in Greek grammar thus became a product of and panacea for the fear of growing up, the childlike need for security.

Another matter on which Gogol's views were shared by many is the following: the interest in antiquity in Russia developed as an aspect of the interest in the West and Europe; the study of antiquity was given impetus and Greek and Latin were included in the educational programme with a view to catching up with the rest of Europe in this regard. But the rise of the Slavophiles suddenly seems to mark a complete about-face: they radically turn their backs on the Westerners and Europe, but at the same time they continue to see Greek antiquity as the cradle of Russian culture. The *possibility* of this attitude was already implicit in the argumentation with which Uvarov in the twenties had managed to overcome the suspicions harboured by those who opposed the introduction of Greek: knowledge of Greek would contribute to the successful development of Russia's *own* literature, indeed of Russia's *own* identity.

Gogol's position is comparable with that of the Slavophiles. From his early years he lived with his back to Europe, as it were. This was decisive for the way in which he used the Greek heritage (he all but ignores the Latin heritage) as a means of gaining control over his own world.<sup>9</sup> To get a better view of this we need to take a closer look at the young Gogol.

In the autumn of 1831 part I and in the spring of 1832 part II of a collection of short stories was published: *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*. It was an event of the first order, a double success which immediately gave Gogol the position of leading prose writer in Russia. At the time he was living in St Petersburg, the city to which he had moved in December 1828 at the age of just

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<sup>9</sup> On Gogol and the ancient classics see I. Zvinsky, "Gogol, kak lyubitel antichnago mira", *Germes* 1909, No. 13, p. 419-421; No. 14, p. 441-446; S.I. Radtsig, "Gogol i Gomer", *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta, istoriko-filologicheskaya seriya*, No. 4, 1959, p. 121-138.

nineteen. He was not, like so many young men at his age, planning to study at the university. He had already completed his education: seven years at Prince Bezborodko's Gymnasium of Higher Sciences in Nezhin. This school existed as a gymnasium from 1820 to 1832. Later its name was changed to the Historico-Philological Institute of Prince Bezborodko—which is to say that it became a training institute for gymnasium teachers, mainly teachers of classical languages. In Gogol's time it was a distinguished private boarding school which offered its pupils, provided they had passed their final examinations (but in other cases a way round might be found), access to the civil service without the need to obtain a university degree first.

Gogol's years at school, unlike those of Pushkin, were not the happiest years of his life.<sup>10</sup> In 1825 his father had died. Earlier, in 1819, he had lost his only brother, Ivan. These were traumatic experiences. We know of his father that he spent long days in the open fields together with his two small sons—Nikolai was a year older than Ivan—to whom he would tell stories and recite poems. On these occasions the two brothers would also hear tales about the colourful life of their grandfather, Afanassy Yanovsky. He was the son of a family which from generation to generation had produced only obscure village priests. Grandfather Afanassy, long before he was a grandfather, was of a mind to change this. He studied at the Clerical Academy in Kiev, which resulted in a little Latin and so much enlightenment that he was admitted to a worldly career and a place in the eighth rank of the Table of Ranks. He also adopted a double name—Gogol-Yanovsky instead of just Yanovsky—and set himself up, with the help of a forged document, as a descendant of an ennobled Cossack leader from the seventeenth century, who is called Andrei Gogol in the document concerned but is known as Ostap Gogol in the real records. Because a patent of nobility alone, even if genuine, does not yet make one a landowner, Afanassy Gogol-Yanovsky's next step was to abduct a girl from a rich Cossack family. This family was genuinely noble: the somewhat unconventionally secured

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<sup>10</sup> For biographical details use has been made of V. Setchkareff, *N.V. Gogol, Leben und Schaffen*, Berlin 1953; D. Magarshack, *Gogol, A Life*, London 1957; H. Troyat, *Gogol*, Paris 1971; S. Karlinsky, *The Sexual Labyrinth of Nikolai Gogol*, Cambridge, Mass., 1976; Keil.

marital union was subsequently normalized and the bride thus in fact supplied the desired estate and more than 250 serfs.

This country estate is called Vasilievka. It is not far from the village of Dikanka, between Kiev and Poltava. In the same area lies the village of Mirgorod. This village has a place in literature because Gogol gave the title *Mirgorod* to the volume of short stories which he published in 1835 (best known of these is the historical, or pseudo-historical, story *Taras Bulba*). Vasilievka, Dikanka, Mirgorod: here, in the heart of the Ukraine, lies the paradise of Nikolai Gogol's lost patriarchal past.

Rarely has a writer described his native countryside so passionately as Gogol. Hardened readers will think it merely sentimental, but at least it is not false sentiment. Take Gogol's description of a summer's day in the Ukraine, on the first page of the first story of *Evenings*: "How luxuriously warm the hours when mid-day glitters in stillness and sultry heat and the blue fathomless ocean covering the plain like a dome seems to be slumbering, bathed in languor, clasping the fair earth and holding it close in its ethereal embrace! ... The insects of the air flit like sparks of emerald, topaz, and ruby about the gay vegetable gardens ... Gray haystacks and golden sheaves of wheat, like tents, stray over the plain ... the river in its green, proudly erect frame—how full of delight is the Little Russian summer!"<sup>11</sup>

Or take the overture of the first story in the volume *Mirgorod*, "Old-World Landowners":<sup>12</sup>

I am very fond of the modest manner of life of those solitary owners of remote villages, who in Little Russia are commonly called "old-fashioned", who are like tumbledown picturesque little houses, delightful in their simplicity and complete unlikeness to the new smooth buildings whose walls have not yet been discolored by the rain, whose roof is not yet covered with green lichen, and whose porch does not display its red bricks through the peeling stucco. I like sometimes to descend for a moment into that extraordinarily secluded life in which not one desire flits beyond the palisade surrounding the little courtyard, beyond the hurdle of the orchard filled with plum and apple trees, beyond the village huts surrounding it, lying all aslant under the shade of

<sup>11</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 1, p. 15-16. Translation: *The Complete Tales of Nikolai Gogol*, edited with an Introduction and Notes by Leonard J. Kent (Constance Garnett translation revised throughout by the editor), 2 vols., Chicago 1985, vol. I, p. 8-9 (referred to as Kent).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 7-8; Kent, vol. II, p. 1-2.

willows, elders, and pear trees. ... I can see now the low-pitched little house ...; in front of the house a spacious courtyard of short fresh grass with a little pathway trodden from the storehouse to the kitchen and from the kitchen to the master's apartments; a long-necked goose drinking water with young goslings soft as down around her; a palisade hung with strings of dried pears and apples and rugs put out to air; a cartful of melons standing by the storehouse; an unharnessed ox lying lazily beside it—they all have an inexpressible charm for me, perhaps because I no longer see them and because everything from which we are parted is dear to us.

... But best of all I liked the owners of these modest little nooks—the little old men and women who came out solicitously to meet me. I can see their faces sometimes even now among fashionable dress coats in the noise and crowd, and then I sink into a half-dreaming state, and the past rises up before me. Their faces always betray such kindness, such hospitality and singleheartedness, that unconsciously one renounces, for a brief spell at least, all ambitious dreams, and imperceptibly passes with all one's heart into this lowly bucolic existence.

... it sends a strange pang to my heart when I imagine myself going sometime again to their old, now deserted dwelling, and seeing the heap of ruined huts, the pond choked with weeds, an overgrown ditch on the spot where the little house stood—and nothing more. It is sad! I am sad at the thought!

This is the world from which young Nikolai Gogol was torn away in 1821 when he was taken to Nezhin, two hundred kilometres away, a journey of four days. Gogol was a shy little boy with runny ears, pathologically attached to his parents and, socially speaking, vastly inferior to his class-conscious aristocratic fellow pupils. A benevolent, wealthy *patronus* of his mother had secured a place and a scholarship for him in Nezhin. The gymnasium was housed in a smooth new building, in neo-classicistic style, with lofty Greek columns intended to inspire awe and suggest Enlightenment. As at Pushkin's Lyceum, Greek was not on the programme. Latin was: Cicero, Ovid, Horace, Virgil were officially part of the curriculum, but it seems unlikely that they were extensively read in practice and Gogol, moreover, was never a diligent pupil.

A certain Ivan Kulzhinsky, now only remembered for having taught Gogol Latin, writes in his memoirs: "I can still see him, a blond boy, a worsted uniform [the aristocratic pupils wore more splendid uniforms, MAW], long hair; he never spoke a word, as if he carried a secret around with him [his fellow pupils called him "the mysterious dwarf", MAW], awkward in his bearing,



an indolent look in his eyes. He never prepared his lessons. I had him in my class for three years and all that time he never extended his proficiency in translation beyond Koshansky's first paragraph: *universus mundus plerumque distribuitur in duas partes, coelum et terram*. In the meantime he always had an open book on his knees under the desk, without caring a straw about *coelum* and *terram*. For three years I only gave him noughts and ones and one can safely say that when he left the gymnasium, he knew nothing about [Latin] grammar and was incapable of properly declining his verbs in any language".

"... Nor did he ever learn anything from my colleagues. Nevertheless, there were a few teachers who might have been able to thaw him out, if only he had opened up to them. But he even refused to learn to write Russian correctly. ... A pity that we did not unriddle him. But oh well, who knows, perhaps it is better this way".<sup>13</sup> A philosophical man, Ivan Kulzhinsky.

Gogol himself was in the habit of mocking everything to do with Latin. We already find him doing this in the introduction to *Evenings*:<sup>14</sup>

... a student who had been getting lessons from a deacon came back to his father such a Latin scholar that he had forgotten our language: he put *us* on the end of all the words; a spade was *spadus*, a female was *femalus*. It happened one day that he went with his father in the fields. The Latin scholar saw a rake and asked his father: "What do you call that, Father?" And, without looking at what he was doing, he stepped on the teeth of the rake. Before the father had time to answer, the handle flew up and hit the boy on the head. "The damned rake!" he cried, putting his hand to his forehead and jumping half a yard into the air, "may the devil shove its father off a bridge, how it can hit!" So he remembered the name, you see, poor fellow!

Ivan Shponka, one of the titular heroes in *Evenings*, has a Russian teacher at school with a remarkable Latin surname: Nikifor Timofeevich Gerundium. Ivan is a well-behaved and bashful boy, who never gets up to mischief in the classroom and always has a penknife with him. This even attracts the attention of the Latin teacher himself, "whose cough in the passage was enough to reduce the class to terror, even before his frieze coat and

<sup>13</sup> V. Veresaev, *Gogol v zhizni. Sistematischesky svod podlinnykh svidetelstv sovremennikov*, Moscow 1933 (reprint Ann Arbor 1983), p. 60-61 and 73.

<sup>14</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 1, p. 10; Kent, vol. 1, p. 5-6 (Preface).

pockmarked face had appeared in the door-way". This teacher—"who always had two birches lying on his desk and half of whose pupils were always on their knees"—is described in unflattering terms; he is a real bully.<sup>15</sup>

The Academy of Kiev, bastion of *latinstvo*, also comes in for a fair share of Gogol's ridicule. Gogol's father had studied there as well as grandfather Afanassy. The first pages of the story "Vy" in *Mirgorod* offer a hilarious send-up of life at this Academy. The story then concentrates on the vicissitudes of three students: a theologian, a philosopher, and a rhetorician, that is, a student of literature. "Three lost ones", true Christian souls, who grab and steal any food they can find, "from no selfish motive but simply from habit".<sup>16</sup>

In *Taras Bulba* we get much the same picture, starting with the opening scene, where Andrei and Ostap, the two sons of the hot-headed Cossack leader Taras Bulba, return home after finishing their studies at the Academy in Kiev. Reading this story as a historical novel, one should be aware that it is full of fictionalized memories of Gogol's own youth, memories of his father and grandfather and brother, and references to the darker sides of the lost patriarchal past. Compared with these references, the anti-Latin and anti-intellectual passages are no more than asides, but they are no less typical for that.

Taras says to his sons: "It's all nonsense—what they have been stuffing your heads with: and the seminaries and all the books and vocabularies and philosophies, and all that rubbish. I'd spit on it all!" The eldest son, provoked by his father, gets into a fight with the old man and soundly thrashes him. Taras is deeply satisfied: thank God his son has not forgotten how to fight. True enough, for all his fulmination against learning, it was Taras's own idea to send his sons to the Academy, "for all persons of consequence in those days thought it necessary to give their sons an education even if they were only to forget it completely afterwards", but you never knew how it would turn out. After all—and then a meditation follows which seems to have just as much bearing on the gymnasium in Nezhin in 1825 as on the Academy in Kiev in 1650:

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 207-209; Kent, vol. I, p. 175.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 165-205; Kent, vol. II, p. 139.

... these scholastic, grammatical, rhetorical, and logical subtleties had absolutely no relation with the times, and were never applied or repeated in life. Those who studied them could not connect their acquirements, even the least pedantic, with anything in their lives. The most learned men in those days were more ignorant than the rest, because they were entirely removed from experience.

But, as we saw, Ostap had not forgotten how to fight, and this called for a celebration: "Come pass up your goblet; well, is the vodka good? And what's vodka in Latin?" Ah, that, of course, Andrei and Ostap did not learn at school. "They were morons, you know, the Latins, son; they did not even know there was such a thing as vodka in the world. What is his name, who wrote Latin verses? I am not strong in literature, and so I don't know; Horace, was it?"<sup>17</sup>

The Ukrainian past which Gogol started to recall longingly and dream about as soon as he had moved to St Petersburg had its dark sides too. But for Gogol this was no reason to renounce the patriarchal ideal; rather it was all the more reason to make it absolute, as his exalted and naive prediction about the effect of Zhukovsky's translation of the *Odyssey* makes clear. Gogol has nothing to say about the violent and sometimes plainly sadistic scenes in the *Odyssey* (for instance, the description in Book 22 of the execution of Melanthios and the twelve faithless slave girls). But the machismo of the titular hero in *Taras Bulba* most certainly does produce a feeling of repugnance in the reader and there can be no doubt that this was Gogol's intention. The fact that repugnance does not turn into downright loathing is due to the way in which Gogol consistently underplays the events in the story, from the first page to the last, by making full use of humour and irony as well as pathos. The first thing which strikes one when reading Gogol for the first time is his sense of humour and how macabre it often is.

This is also true of *Taras Bulba*. Without its humour the story would be all but unbearable. When all the bloody acts of war have been concluded, we find Taras being burnt to death at a Polish stake. This is the tragic end of his desperate attempt to be revenged for the horrific manner in which the Poles tortured to death his beloved son, the warrior Ostap. His other son, Andrei, had gone

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34-38 and 42; Kent, vol. II, p. 24; 32-33; 25-26.

over to his arch-enemy Poland for the sake of a beautiful Polish girl, even though she had made him look a complete fool at their first encounter. He saved Poland from certain defeat, but was subsequently ambushed by his former Cossack friends and shot down by his father in cold blood like a defenceless calf.

Of this trio of main characters, Ostap and Andrei are named after the seventeenth-century ancestor fabricated by grandfather Afanassy, the Cossack leader Ostap alias Andrei Gogol. Taras, therefore, probably represents grandfather Afanassy, at least partly. For another part Taras also seems to be a fictionalized projection of Gogol's father, since the character of Andrei obviously represents Nikolai Gogol himself. This assumption is mainly based on the motif—the very motif which keeps the story going—of betrayal for the sake of an unattainable and forbidden woman. For the psychologists among the Gogolians this clinches the diagnosis: Nikolai Gogol suffered from a serious and unresolved Oedipus complex.<sup>18</sup>

There are many places in Gogol's work which seem to support this diagnosis, and there are quite a few incidents in his life of which the same is true or which at least show that he was never able to establish a normal, lasting relationship with a woman. These cannot be discussed here, since they lie beyond the scope of this book. But there is one exception which we do have to mention. This is the story *Woman*, which appeared in January 1831. It is the first publication under Gogol's own name and it introduces, quite unexpectedly and in full splendour, the philosopher Plato.

We cannot say with any certainty where Gogol acquired his knowledge of Plato. Two years earlier, in May 1829, at his own expense and under a pseudonym, he had published a long narrative poem: *Gants Kyukhelgarten*. The story is set against the background of the events in Greece in the twenties, in particular the years 1823-1827. It is probable, therefore, that Gogol already wrote this story in Nezhin. He continued working on it in the months July-November 1828, while brooding in Vasilievka on his departure to St Petersburg. The titular hero is a German youth

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. H. Jilek, "Die Stellung des 'Taras Bul'ba' in Gogols Gesamtwerk", *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie* 16 (1939), p. 123-141; Karlinsky, p. 77-86.

who, following the vogue of the day, suffers from *Weltschmerz*. In correct German his name would be spelt Hans Küchelgarten. Hans is the vehicle of the young Gogol's own dreams and ideals. Hans wants to become famous, he wants to improve the world, and he has good hopes of succeeding in both, but the problem is that he lacks "the iron will to resist the vanity of the world". Restless as he is, he cannot reconcile himself to the prospect of a boring bourgeois existence as a respectably married family man, and so, shortly before he is to marry his faithful Luise, he runs away to Greece. Meditating among the ancient ruins, he comes to the conclusion that life as a family man in Germany is not so bad after all.

A day after he left for Greece, Luise only finds books in his study: works by Plato, Schiller, Petrarch, Tieck, Aristophanes, and Winckelmann—in this order.<sup>19</sup> These must have been the books which Gogol had lying open on his knees under the desk during the Latin classes of Ivan Kulzhinsky. In 1821 Ivan Matveevich Muraviev-Apostol, the father of four Decembrists, had published a translation of Aristophanes' *Clouds*; in 1823 the 26 volumes of Greek Classics translated by Martynov had started to appear; in 1825 the comedy *Aristophanes, or The Presentation of "The Horsemen"* by Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Shakovskoi had its first night; and in 1827 B.I. Obolensky launched a translation of Plato's *Laws*—to mention just a few literary events. As to how Gogol may have had access to these books, it is relevant to consider that in his later school years he was entrusted with the administration of the library. Moreover, it was the time when a new teacher, N.G. Belousov, started to assert his influence, comparable with that of the philosopher Aleksandr Galich on the young Pushkin.

Belousov was an erudite man, well abreast of the latest developments in German idealistic developments and an admirer of the Decembrists. A few concerned colleagues believed him to be a dangerous freethinker and they communicated their suspicions to the authorities. The secret police was called in to interrogate pupils, including Gogol. The matter dragged on for years and reached such a pitch that not only was Belousov fired and banished, together with three others, but the school ceased to exist

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<sup>19</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 1, p. 247-285, esp. p. 269 (kartina x).

in 1832.<sup>20</sup> Although direct proof is lacking, it seems almost certain that Belousov was the man who introduced Gogol to Plato. It is generally assumed that the splendid description of the teacher Aleksandr Petrovich in the first chapter of *Dead Souls* part II is a fictional portrait of Belousov:

The idol of the boys, a model for teachers, the incomparable Alexander Petrovich had the gift of divining a man's nature. ... How well he knew children! How well he knew how to inspire! ... How the boys loved him! ... His least word of encouragement thrilled them, made them feel happy and tremble with excitement, ... and he employed every method calculated to form a firm character ...

He did not employ many teachers. He taught most of the subjects himself, he knew how to convey the very essence of a subject without using any pedantic terms or pompous theories and opinions, so that even a small boy could grasp immediately what he needed it for. ... most of his lectures consisted of accounts of what the young man would expect to find on leaving school and he knew how to describe the whole sphere of his pupil's future career so well that the young man, though he was still sitting on the school bench, was in his thoughts and spirit already living in the particular branch of the Civil Service he had chosen. He concealed nothing; all the disappointments and obstacles which a man might find in his path, all the temptations and trials that were in store for him, he presented to them in all their nakedness without concealing anything.<sup>21</sup>

It is quite possible that Plato was also brought to Gogol's attention by his new friends in St Petersburg, in particular Zhukovsky and Pletnyov, as well as by Belousov. Thus the sketch *Boris Godunov*, from 1830 but published much later, contains a passage which makes use of the speech of Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium*.<sup>22</sup> In this speech Aristophanes, in a fantastic tale about the origin of mankind, describes that human beings in their present form are the lonely halves of originally much more perfect "double" beings with four legs and four arms and two heads. However, these double beings had provoked the anger of the gods with their ambition to storm the heavens and set upon the gods. To safeguard their own position of power and to cut these proud beings down to

<sup>20</sup> Veresaev, p. 47-48 and 55.

<sup>21</sup> Gogol, *Dead Souls*, translated by David Magarshack, Harmondsworth (Penguin) 1976, p. 265-267.

<sup>22</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 6, p. 12-17, esp. p. 16; Plato, *Symposium* 189c-193d.

size, Zeus had bisected each one of them lengthwise, "like fruit which is to be dried and preserved", and so it came about, according to Aristophanes, that every human being in his loneliness spent his whole life searching for his lost other half.

Can it be that Gogol met his lost other half in St Petersburg? When it became clear in the summer of 1829 that his *Hans Küchelgarten* was a complete flop, Gogol impulsively took the boat to Lübeck. He wanted to go to America. But he got no further than Lübeck, for it was there that he realized that there is no point in running away from oneself, and so he had no option but to return to St Petersburg in September. In a highly emotional letter to his mother dated 24 July 1829 he says that love was the reason for his sudden departure. But it was not just ordinary love, no, God had allowed him to meet a sort of female emanation of himself. It was True Love.

Only to you alone can I tell it....You know that I was gifted with firmness—for a young man even rare firmness. ... Who would have expected such a weakness from me. But I saw her....No, I will not give her name...she is too exalted for anyone, not only for me. I would call her an angel, but this expression is low and does not suit her. ... She is a divinity—but one to a certain extent invested with human passions. A face whose striking radiance engraves itself in the heart in one instant, eyes quickly piercing the soul. But no man of the human race will survive their radiance, burning, piercing through everything. ... No, this was not love...at least I have never heard of such a love. In a burst of madness and terrible mental torments, I thirsted, I seethed just to stare, I was greedy only for one look...To glance at her one more time—that was my one single desire growing stronger and stronger with inexpressibly cutting yearning. ...absolutely everything in the world was alien to me then, life and death were equally unbearable, and my soul could not give an account of its actions. I saw that I had to run away from myself if I wanted to preserve my life, to return even a shadow of peace into my tortured soul. With tender emotion I recognized the Unseen Hand caring for me and I blessed the road so miraculously appointed to me. No, this being whom He sent to deprive me of peace and quiet, to upset my shakily created world was not a woman. ... This was a divinity ... But for the sake of God, don't ask her name. She is too exalted, exalted.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, izd. AN SSSR, 14 vols., Leningrad 1940-1952, vol. 10, p. 147-149; Veresaev, p. 83-84. Translation: *Letters of Nikolai Gogol*, selected and edited by Carl R. Proffer, translated by Carl R. Proffer in collaboration with Vera Krivoshein, Ann Arbor 1967, p. 32-33.

A shattered Gogol. Some later biographers have suggested that he made the whole story up from start to finish. The almost hysterical character of the letter makes it hard to take this idea seriously. One can't help thinking that there must have been some or other *expérience vécue*, and that this was an experience which always stayed in his memory and also left its traces in his work. In the story *Rome* (1842) it is Annunziata—"the Announced One"—who is the ideal woman for the male protagonist (clearly again a mirror image of Gogol), unattainable and only visible from afar and for a fleeting moment, more the epiphany of a goddess than a woman of flesh and blood. In *Nevisky Prospekt* (1835) it is the nameless (!) lady who is the crowning glory of creation for the poor artist Piskarev:

... what divine features! The dazzling whiteness of the exquisite brow was framed by hair lovely as an agate. They curled, those marvelous tresses, and some of them strayed below the hat and caressed the cheek, flushed by the chill of evening with a delicate fresh color. A swarm of exquisite visions hovered about her lips. All the memories of childhood, all the visions that rise from dreaming and quiet inspiration in the lamplight—all seemed to be blended, mingled, and reflected on her delightful lips. ... but how could he lose this divine being without discovering the sanctuary in which she was enshrined?

This sanctuary turns out to be a brothel. Piskarev seeks solace in opium and this produces the desired visions:

She! She again, but now in a quite different world! Oh, how charmingly she sat at the window of a bright little country house! In her dress was the simplicity in which the poet's thought is clothed. And her hair! Merciful heavens!

When he has come back to his senses, he goes and visits her. He wants to "save" her. She is still as beautiful as ever ("though a pallor had crept over her face, no longer quite so fresh"), but the confrontation with mundane reality proves too much for him. She laughs in his face, he runs away, loses his mind, and cuts his throat with a razor.

It is all very sad, and described with such intensity that one finds it hard not to assume that the story is based on some or other experience of the author himself. There is, after all, no fiction without underlying reality...

There is one way of overcoming such a traumatic experience:



by denying that reality, or what people take to be reality, the perceptible world, *is* reality:

Oh, do not trust that Nevsky Prospekt! ... Everything is a cheat, everything is a dream, everything is other than it seems! ... but ladies are least of all to be trusted. ... However attractively in the evening a fair lady's cloak may flutter in the distance, nothing would induce me to follow her and try to get a closer view. Keep your distance, for God's sake, keep your distance from the street lamp! ... It deceives at all hours, the Nevsky Prospekt does, but most of all when night falls in masses of shadow on it, ... and when the devil himself lights the street lamps to show everything in false colors.<sup>24</sup>

Plato's great discovery, and the discovery of so many poets: "It Must Be Abstract" (Wallace Stevens); Platonism as the theoretical foundation of symbolism. Only in the twentieth century was it gradually realized that Gogol was far from being the standard-bearer of realism which he was always held to be. "Petersburg streets possess one indubitable quality", wrote Andrei Bely: "they transform passersby into shadows".<sup>25</sup> Bely was a symbolist. He could perhaps be called Gogol's spiritual heir.

The story *Woman* is, so to speak, the confession of Gogol's belief in Plato's philosophy.<sup>26</sup> In this story Plato is sharply criticized by his young follower Telecles. You do not know women, Telecles says, for otherwise you would not have idealized them so and placed them on a pedestal. Telecles himself has just found out what women are really like, and it hurts. He had fallen in love with the divinely beautiful Alcinoë, and she had graciously accepted his attentions, but now he has seen her with another man. Telecles feels betrayed and injured. Plato patiently explains to him that he would not get excited about something so banal if he had loved the girl in the truly Platonic fashion, and that it is stupid of him now suddenly to condemn Alcinoë so violently. "What were you in the past and what are you now, since you have seen eternity in the divine eyes of Alcinoë?" Only when we see woman do we see the gods. "She is poetry, she is thought, and

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<sup>24</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 3, p. 7-44, esp. p. 16, 28, 43-44; Kent, vol. I, p. 215, 224, 226, 238.

<sup>25</sup> Andrei Bely, *Petersburg*, translated by R.A. Maguire and J.E. Malmstad, Harmondsworth (Penguin) 1983, p. 22.

<sup>26</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 6, p. 7-11; cf. Setchkareff, p. 94-95; Karlinsky, p. 26-30; Keil, p. 48-50.

we are only her incarnation in reality. Her radiance penetrates into us, and the more deeply it penetrates, the more perfect we become. As long as the image lives only in the artist's mind and forms itself there without being a body, it is a woman. As soon as it assumes a material form and expresses itself in something tangible, it becomes a man. Why then does an artist long with such an unappeased desire to turn his immortal idea into coarse matter and subjugate it to our ordinary senses? Because he is guided by one lofty emotion: to express the divine essence in matter itself, to make even a part of the boundless world of his soul accessible to people, to incorporate woman in man".

The eyes of one who regards such a work of art take the opposite route: what does the spectator see? Only matter? No, through the matter he perceives the artist's original idea, "his heart strings will be touched, and loudly and clearly, as if it were a call from his country, the irrevocably lost past will answer in him".

This conception is essentially a summary of Plato's ideas about love and art, derived from his *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, and supplemented with new elements drawn from the German Romantics. The basic idea is that there is an ideal reality ("woman") and that people can attain to this reality through love and art. "What is love? It is the homeland of the soul, the beautiful yearning of a man for those bygone days where his life had its unblemished beginning, where the innocence of the baby has left its inexpressible and indelible mark everywhere, where a man feels that he is in his own native land. And when the soul is received into the ethereal womb of a woman's soul, ... then the sounds of yore are heard again, then the lost paradise returns and it will never be lost again".

At the beginning of the thirties the yearning for the lost past stirred up an ambition in Gogol to make a name for himself as a historian, a historian of his native country, of course, and so a historian of the Ukraine. For a while it seemed that this might actually come to pass.

One of Uvarov's first actions as Minister of Education was the founding of the University of Kiev, or as it officially came to be called, the University of St Vladimir. At first sight it seems somewhat strange that less prominent cities like Kazan and Kharkov were given universities much earlier than Kiev, and even when

Kiev finally received a university, it seemed an *ad hoc* measure rather than the result of a well-meditated policy.

The fact is that Kiev owed its university to the Polish uprising of 1831. The leader of this uprising was Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, whom we encountered earlier as the patron of Ernst Groddeck, the founder of Polish *Altertumswissenschaft* and the teacher of Adam Mickiewicz and the historian Joachim Lelewel, eminent names in the history of the University of Vilnius. But in 1832 this history was ended with one stroke of the pen: the University was closed, as the University of Warsaw had been closed in 1831. Both institutions, especially that of Vilnius, were regarded as dangerous centres of resistance which the Russians could no longer allow to exist. For a proper understanding of this measure one needs to know that from the beginning of the nineteenth century the University of Vilnius had been an extremely flourishing institution. In 1830 1,322 students were enrolled, a considerably larger number than the 814 students enrolled in that year at the second-largest university in the Russian Empire, that of Moscow.<sup>27</sup>

To fill the gap thus created, it was decided in 1833 in St Petersburg that a new university would be founded in Kiev. It soon opened its doors in 1834. The reason why Kiev was chosen as the seat of the new university was not only historical—Kiev was “the mother of Russian cities”—but also highly practical: Kiev was the headquarters of the First Army Corps. The advantage of this was the presence of enough troops to suppress possible student riots. The founding of the University of Kiev can moreover be regarded as a deliberate attempt to create a stronghold of Great Russian cultural imperialism in the Western borderland against Poland and Lithuania, and thus against Roman Catholicism with its ever-suspect *latinstvo* and against the feverish pursuit of romantic dreams of freedom and independence.

In his policy on the new university, however, Uvarov by no means excluded the Poles and Catholics.<sup>28</sup> Nor was he in a position to do so, given the lack of sufficiently qualified Russians.

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<sup>27</sup> D. Beauvois, *Lumières et société en Europe de l'est: l'université de Vilna et les écoles polonaises de l'empire russe, 1803-1832*, Paris 1977, p. 214, 399, 888, 911.

<sup>28</sup> C.H. Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education. An Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786-1855*, DeKalb 1984, p. 193-197.

Half of the chairs were occupied by Poles, the Russians appointed were mainly Ukrainians, and among the students the Catholics had a majority of three to one over the Orthodox in 1848. Apart from a few incidents in 1839, the expected disturbances did not occur. But this was above all due to the massive emigration of Polish aristocrats, soldiers, and intellectuals in 1831. Most of them went to France—"toute la France est polonaise", one Frenchman cried out with some exaggeration: there were about ten thousand Poles, who spent the rest of their lives in France quarreling with each other about what they should have done in the past and were going to do in the future.

For young ambitious Ukrainians the founding of the new university suddenly made it very attractive to be on good terms with Uvarov. Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol saw his opportunity. He regarded himself as more than brilliant and more than promising, and believed that this might be enough to make him professor of general history in Kiev in 1834. He would write a great work: *The World and Its Peoples*. He envisaged filling two or three volumes, but the work proceeded disappointingly, so he thought up a new project: the history of his beloved Ukraine.

This work would comprise four or six volumes. It would not be an arid resumé of battles and dates, nor a dry rational analysis. Historiography should not be factual. Gogol's history of the Ukraine was to be an artistic reconstruction: the author would mainly appeal to the emotions of his readers and he would mainly base himself on surviving folk-songs. "The historian must not search in them [i.e. those folk-songs] for indications of the day or date of a battle, or for an exact description of the place, or an accurate report. But if he wishes to find out the true life style, the elements of national character, all the quirks and shades of emotions, anxieties, sufferings and rejoicings of the depicted nation; when he wishes to extract the spirit of a passed age, the general character of the nation as a whole and of each individual separately, then he will be completely satisfied". He will not only be helped by folk-songs, but also by geography: "Geography must explain a great deal of what would be inexplicable without it. It must show how the earth's position has influenced entire nations; how it bestowed on them a particular character".<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 6, p. 42-56. Translation: *Arabesques*, translated

For Gogol there could be no doubt that this profound view of history made him the obvious candidate for the new chair of general history in the University of Kiev. He presented his policy plans as a prospective professor to Uvarov in person. He published these plans in 1835 in the collection *Arabesques*, where he declared solemnly—and entirely in accordance with his patriarchalism—that he intended to train his students to be “gentle, humble, noble, necessary, and indispensable associates of a great sovereign”. No disturbances would be able to shake their faith in the Church and the Emperor, they would be immune to infection by any malignant political viruses, and the professor’s fervent, stirring lectures in the Emperor’s service would ensure that the students had no opportunity to speak with contempt about their Country; on the contrary, they would all be harmoniously inspired by the most exalted thoughts.

Gogol was rewarded for his pious intentions with a diamond ring. The professorship went to a Serb who held a chair in Khar'kov: Vladimir Frantsevich Tsykh (1805-1837). Professor Tsykh published a master’s dissertation and a few decent articles on subjects from Graeco-Roman history. In Kiev he even became Rector of the University.<sup>30</sup> That is all there is to say about this scholar.

The falling through of his appointment in Kiev also destroyed Gogol’s chances of returning to his native country. This was a heavy blow. It meant that for the time being he was doomed to stay in St Petersburg to earn a living. He almost died of homesickness in this city. There is reason to believe that the change of tone in his work—as from *The Inspector General*, to name but the most famous work from this period—is also related to this rejection. Mildness gives way to more ridicule, satire, and cynicism. His failure as a history teacher in St Petersburg will also have contributed to this. For, shortly after rejecting Gogol for the chair in Kiev, Uvarov had been persuaded to give him a chance in St Petersburg. Heavy pressure had been exerted to this end by two of

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by Alexander Tulloch, introd. by Carl R. Proffer, Ann Arbor 1982, p. 186 and 43.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. V.P. Buzeskul, *Vseobshchaya istoriya i ee predstaviteli v Rossii v xix i nachale xx veka*, vol. 1, Leningrad 1929, p. 45-46; Whittaker on Tsykh, p. 194, is probably incorrect.

Gogol's patrons, who were in turn protégés of Uvarov: the poet Zhukovsky and the man to whom Pushkin had dedicated his *Eugeny Onegin* (completed in 1833): Pyotr Aleksandrovich Pletnyov (1792-1865). In his younger years Pletnyov had belonged to the circle of young poets around Pushkin, but later had devoted himself to literary criticism. He enjoyed a good reputation as a teacher, was the private tutor of Russian literature at the court, and had received a chair in 1832. The pinnacle of his scholarly career was his appointment in 1840 as Rector of the University, a position which he held for twenty-one years.

Gogol was so nervous about his first lecture on 24 July 1834 that he learnt the whole text by heart. It was not a success; it was, on the contrary, the beginning of "sixteen inglorious and humiliating months", as Gogol was forced to admit afterwards (in a letter to Pogodin). He was constantly fiddling with his hat and gloves, peering suspiciously into the lecture-room, and had already started his lecture before reaching the lectern. The lecture was on "the essence" of the Middle Ages. Its text was later included by him in his collection *Arabesques*. Relatively speaking, this first lecture went reasonably well, but the next time, when he could no longer fill the time with vague generalities, he made a complete shambles of it. He came late, started by remarking that his mood was not sufficiently "fiery" for him to be able to say anything adequate about the "people-erupting volcano" of Asia, made a few incoherent remarks, and left after twenty minutes.<sup>31</sup> It did not get any better later.

In January 1836 Turgenev was among Gogol's audience. It was his first introduction to the man. Turgenev thought that Gogol had an original approach to teaching, and was struck by a few points:<sup>32</sup>

In the first place, Gogol usually missed two lectures out of three; secondly, even when he appeared in the lecture room, he did not so much speak as whisper something incoherently and showed us small engravings of views of Palestine and other Eastern countries, looking terribly embarrassed all the time. We were all convinced that he knew nothing of history (and we were hardly wrong) and that Mr. Gogol-Janovsky, our professor (he appeared under that name on the list of lecturers) had nothing in common

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<sup>31</sup> Magarshack, *Gogol*, p. 101.

<sup>32</sup> I.S. Turgenev, "Vospominaniya", *Sochineniya*, vol. 14, Moscow-Leningrad 1967, p. 75-76; translation: *Turgenev's Literary Reminiscences and autobiographical fragments*, translated by David Magarshack, London 1959, p. 149.

with the writer Gogol, already familiar to as the author of *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*. At the final examination on his subject he sat with his face tied up in a handkerchief, as though suffering from toothache, looking terribly depressed, and never opened his mouth. Professor I.P. Shulgin put the questions to the students for him. I can still see, as though it were today, his thin, long-nosed face with the two ends of the black silk handkerchief sticking out like two ears. No doubt he realized very well how utterly comic and awkward his position was: he sent in his resignation that very year. That, however, did not prevent him from exclaiming: "Unrecognized I mounted the rostrum and unrecognized I descend from it." He was born to be the instructor of all his contemporaries, but not from a university chair.

The story about the handkerchief tied around Gogol's head was not made up by Turgenev. Something like that could only be made up by Gogol. The black silk handkerchief was real, as an account of one of Gogol's colleagues confirms. When Gogol as a little boy was taken by his parents to the gymnasium in Nezhin in 1821, he was already wearing a handkerchief. "He looked ridiculous", one eyewitness noted, and this witness adds that the handkerchief was necessary on account of the wearer's runny ears. In the autumn of 1829 Gogol, his nerves in tatters, applied for a place as an actor at the theatre in St Petersburg. Again he appeared with his oddly tied-up head.<sup>33</sup> Finally, there is the case of Chichikov in chapter 10 of *Dead Souls*: "At last he was dressed, sprinkled with eau-de-Cologne, and, warmly wrapped up, made his way out into the street, keeping his cheek tied up as a precaution".<sup>34</sup> Food for a psychologist?

Gogol himself was in fact aware of his ineptness as a teacher. "Perhaps I do not have enough experience yet", he wrote to Pogodin (14 December 1834), but at the same time he complained rather self-pityingly about his students. Because he did not know what he would live on without his salary, he had it announced in the official university report of 1835 that, "besides his ordinary work", he would write a history of the Middle Ages in eight or nine volumes. But at the end of that year his discharge was no longer to be avoided, as the governors were now seriously demanding that he take his doctoral examination.<sup>35</sup> "Away, away

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<sup>33</sup> Magarshack, *Gogol*, p. 102.

<sup>34</sup> Gogol, *Dead Souls*, transl. Magarshack, p. 222.

<sup>35</sup> Magarshack, *Gogol*, p. 102-103.

from all of this, I need fresh air, I want to be a free Cossack again" (to Pogodin, 6 December 1835).

While he was discovering the difficulty of delivering a proper lecture, the writer in him reached maturity. He published various articles, eight short stories, including *Neusky Prospekt*, two comedies, including *The Inspector General*, and he had several projects under way, including *Taras Bulba* and *Dead Souls*. He also saw the publication of his *Diary of a Madman*. Gogol worked very hard indeed during his period of employment at the university.

At least three of the thirteen pieces comprising the two volumes of *Arabesques* (1835) refer to the subject of Graeco-Roman antiquity. In "On the Movements of Peoples at the End of the Fifth Century" it is late antiquity, the time of Attila the Hun:

He [i.e. Attila] was a small man, almost a dwarf, with a huge head, small Kalmuk eyes, which nevertheless were so quick that none of his subjects could bear to look at them without trembling. With a single glance he could move all of his tribes.<sup>36</sup>

This description has been taken directly from Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, probably in the same French translation by Leclerc de Sept-Chênes which Pushkin had read. The original reads: "His features bore the stamp of his national origin; and the portrait of Attila exhibits the genuine deformity of a modern Calmuck: a large head, a swarthy complexion, small, deep-seated eyes, a flat nose, a few hairs in the place of a beard, broad shoulders, and a short, square body, of nervous strength, though of a disproportioned form; ... he had the custom of fiercely rolling his eyes, as if he wished to enjoy the terror which he inspired". Gibbon, in turn, has drawn on Jordanes (a chronicler from the sixth century), but has added, of course, the Calmuck eyes, for in Jordanes' time there were no Calmucks.<sup>37</sup>

In "Al-Mamun" Gogol explains that the empire of the Arabs was ruined in the ninth century by the philosophy of the Greeks "with the meager conclusions of their cold intellect", which was introduced to the Arabs by al-Mamun. "Life" lyrically sums up

<sup>36</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 6, p. 159-160; translation: Magarshack, *Gogol*, p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> E. Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xxiv; cf. Jordanes, *Getica* xxv 182: *terrebat cuncta ... huc atque illuc circumferens oculos ...; forma brevis, lato pectore, capite grandiore, minutis oculis, rarus barba, canis aspersus, semo nasus, teter colore, origenis suae signa restituens.*



the nature and essence of the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman philosophies of life and their apotheosis in Christianity: the Egyptian pyramids were unable to defy death, the Greek belief in sensual beauty and the Roman belief in power had to give way to the mystery of the mother and child in Bethlehem.

On 19 April 1836 *The Inspector General* had its premiere in the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St Petersburg. Everybody who mattered was there, for Nicholas I was present and so was the future Alexander II. The "mysterious dwarf" from Nezhin, the keen pupil of Plato and of the Aristophanes of the *Symposium*, thus found himself among the very highest dignitaries. The audience was greatly embarrassed by the play and would have walked out, but the czar roared with laughter during the performance and when he started to applaud enthusiastically, no one had the courage to affront him by not clapping. In the following days everybody received in audience by the czar was urged not to miss the play. All performances were therefore sold out. *The Inspector General* became *the* classical comedy of the nineteenth century.

One wonders whether Professor Mikhail Kutorga, who was coming up in the world as an astute and passionate historian of antiquity, having taken over Gogol's position and lectures at the university, was also among the theatre audience. The question cannot be answered with certainty, but *if* he saw the play, his laughter cannot have been quite whole-hearted, for in the first scene of the first act he would have seen himself portrayed in a manner which he, with all his pontifical pompousness, would not have enjoyed:

... what about that History professor? Very clever, very brainy, knows his subject inside out, I'm sure, but why does he have to get so excited? He's all right on the Assyrians and the Babylonians, but I heard him once on Alexander the Great and I thought the school was on fire, the way he carried on. He jumped out of his desk, snatched up his chair and smashed it to the ground. I know Alexander was a hero, but that's no excuse for breaking up Government property, is it?<sup>38</sup>

This is not the only place where Kutorga and his kind are exposed to Gogol's scorn. *Dead Souls*—a work on which Gogol was already

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<sup>38</sup> Nikolai Gogol, *The Government Inspector*, an English version by Edward O. Marsh and Jeremy Brooks, London 1975, p. 25.

fully embarked at the time—also contains a page where Gogol ridicules serious historians. In chapter 9 he describes how two gossiping ladies suddenly receive a few slight indications which make them suppose that there is something suspicious about Chichikov, the protagonist. He cannot really be the respectable gentleman he pretends to be. But if not, then who is he and what is he up to? By combining all kinds of minute facts, some of them imaginary, the ladies are led to believe that they have hit upon a conspiracy, in which Chichikov, with the help of accomplices, is planning to run away with the daughter of the governor. The reader already knows that the combinations and deductions of the two ladies are completely mistaken, but the ladies themselves gradually develop an “inner conviction” which is then proclaimed the truth and in turn causes other characters to harbour new suspicions, all equally absurd—one sleuth even comes up with the theory that Chichikov is none other than Napoleon, who has been released from St Helena by the English to wreak havoc in Russia.

Gogol then compares the “method of investigation” which has led to these absurd conclusions with the way that scientists and scholars go about their work, in particular scholars of ancient history. What specifically may have prompted Gogol to make this comparison? The answer can be no more than a surmise (or an “inner conviction”...?), and this surmise points in the direction of Kutorga—“many of his positions”, as the English historian George Grote remarked in a critical note, “are advanced upon very untrustworthy evidence”.<sup>39</sup> This is Gogol’s comparison:

That both ladies were at last absolutely convinced of the truth of what they had at first regarded as a mere supposition is nothing extraordinary. We who pride ourselves upon our cleverness behave almost in the same way, and our learned discussions are a proof of it. To begin with, a scholar approaches them in a most blackguardly fashion: he begins timidly, moderately, he begins by asking a most modest question: “Is it not from there? Does not a certain country derive its name from that particular place?” Or, “Does not this document date from another and later age?” Or, “Are we sure that such a people does not mean quite another people?” He immediately quotes such and such ancient writers, and as soon as he detects some kind of hint or something that he believes to be a hint, he at once becomes emboldened and self-

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<sup>39</sup> George Grote, *History of Greece*, part ii ch. x (vol. 3, p. 62, in the edition published by Harper & Brothers, New York 1861).

confident, talks to the writers of antiquity like an old friend, puts questions to them and supplies the answers himself, forgetting completely that he has begun with a timid supposition; he already believes that he can see it all, that everything is clear and his argument is concluded with the words: "So that is how it was; so this is the people we have to assume it is; so it is from this point of view that we look at the subject!" Then he proclaims it *ex cathedra*, for all to hear, and the newly discovered truth is sent travelling all over the world, gathering followers and disciples.<sup>40</sup>

But let us return to *The Inspector General*, the classical comedy of the nineteenth century. Is there a relationship with the classical comedy of Aristophanes? His name has already been mentioned a few times in this chapter, and he and Plato were the only classical authors on the bookshelf of Hans Küchelgarten.

It is certain that Gogol knew Aristophanes' *Clouds*. He owed his early interest in theatre, and especially comedy, to his parents. Vasily Gogol was an amateur actor who wrote a few comedies himself and ran the private theatre of the local great landowner Dmitry Troshchinsky, in whose house Gogol's mother—also active on the boards—had grown up. The *tableau de la troupe* of this kind of private theatre in the country was usually made up of serfs. The repertoire consisted of light-hearted plays, usually about contemporary subjects from everyday life, comparable in kind with French vaudeville. Indeed, in Russian one spoke of *vodevil*. There is a clear relationship between *vodevil* and Gogol's comedy. One of the most popular writers in this genre was Aleksandr Shakovskoi. No doubt various plays by Shakovskoi were also performed in Troshchinsky's private theatre. The play *The Cossack Poet* (1812), with its Ukrainian setting, would have been particularly suitable. It is regarded as the first Russian *vodevil*. Earlier on in this chapter I mentioned Shakovskoi as the author of a play called *Aristophanes, or The Presentation of "The Horseman"* (1825). All this can be summed up in a chemical formula as it were: parents + private theatre + Shakovskoi + Aristophanes = Gogol.

Immediately after the premiere of *The Inspector General*, in reply to criticism in the press, Gogol wrote a kind of dialogue with various discussion partners, in which he tried to refute the criticism. One of the criticisms was that the play lacked a love affair to guide the action: two lovers who fall into each other's arms after

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<sup>40</sup> Gogol, *Dead Souls*, transl. Magarshack, p. 197-198.

all kinds of comic intrigues and confusions. Gogol thought this old-fashioned: "It is the idea, the conception underlying the play, which should guide the action. ... Comedy was originally a creation of an entire people. That, at least, is how Aristophanes saw it. It was only much later that the emphasis came to lie on love, but how feeble such plays are, even when they are written by the best playwrights!"<sup>41</sup>

In an article from 1925 Vyacheslav Ivanov—an eminent classical scholar—argued on internal grounds that there is a fundamental similarity between Gogol's *The Inspector General* and the comedy of Aristophanes. The article was written for Vsevolod Meyerhold and discussed how *The Inspector General* should be produced according to a symbolistic reading of the play. The guiding idea in Ivanov's discussion is that both in Gogol and in Aristophanes the action does not focus on relationships between individuals, but that the relationships between the various characters in the play are components of a collective and of a society as a whole, which is at once a symbol and a reflection of the society to which the audience belongs, which is entertained by the action on the stage and thus confronted with itself and with its own rules.

"The *Inspector General* is intrinsically and Aristophanically comic in that the triviality, inanity, and depravity of a way of life based on a generally accepted and unshakable hierarchy of rights that sanctions swindling, fleecing, tyrannizing, coercing, and repressing, are presented as constituting a certain harmonious and foreordained social cosmos. And suddenly this cosmos is shaken to its very foundations, and doubt is cast upon the very principle of hierarchy that insures its existence".<sup>42</sup>

One must surely doubt whether this reading of the play agrees with the intentions of Gogol, who after all believed fundamentally in hierarchy and in the social pyramid as the ideal state. Ivanov's view is disputable in that he implicitly makes Gogol a champion of social and democratic equality or, if one likes (as Ivanov seems to do), of a classless society. Gogol's criticism of his

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<sup>41</sup> "Teatralny raziezd posle predstavleniya novoi komedii", *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 4, p. 249-286, esp. p. 256.

<sup>42</sup> V.I. Ivanov, "Gogol's *Inspector General* and The Comedy of Aristophanes", translated and reprinted in: R.A. Maguire (ed.), *Gogol from the Twentieth Century*, Princeton 1974, p. 200-214, esp. p. 201-202.

environment was rather criticism in support of the hierarchical ideal: in this ideal, according to Gogol, there is no place for swindling, fleecing, tyrannizing, etc., for they leave no margin for the game of *beneficia/officia*, benefactions/services, which are by definition part of this ideal.

Three classical authors from antiquity can be traced in Gogol's work: Aristophanes, Plato, and Homer. These three, but the greatest of these is Homer. I have already said something about the *Odyssey* in the preceding. But Homer is also the poet of the *Iliad*, and I will have to say more on this score. Gogol knew the *Iliad* through and through, once again not in Greek, but in Gnedich's translation, which had appeared in 1829 and which Pushkin, with all the authority which he enjoyed as a poet, had brought to Gogol's attention. It did not fail to have a profound effect. Indeed, one could say that Gogol could never have become the Gogol which he is now—a classic author—without Homer. Before going into this, I need to say something about Gogol and Homer in general.

In retrospect, that is to say, in the light of what has become known in the past decades about the genesis and transmission of oral epic poetry in illiterate cultures, it is easy to understand Gogol's passion for Homer, the legendary "blind bard".

A crowd had gathered around an old bandore player in the town of Glukhov and had been listening for an hour to the blind man's playing. No bandore player sang so well and such marvelous songs. First he sang of the leaders of the Dnieper Cossacks in the old days, of Sagaydachny and Khmelnitzky. Times were different then: the Cossacks were at the height of their glory, they trampled their foes underfoot and no one dared to mock them. The old man sang merry songs too, and looked about at the crowd as though his eyes could see, and his fingers with little sheaths of bone fixed to them danced like flies over the strings, and it seemed that the strings themselves were playing; and the crowd, the old people looking down and the young staring at the singer, dared not even whisper.<sup>43</sup>

A Homeric tableau, reminding one of the picture which Gogol draws of Homer in his discussion of the *Odyssey* in *Selected Passages*:

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<sup>43</sup> *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*, ch. xvi, opening lines; Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. I, p. 201-202; Kent, vol. I, p. 135.

And how skillfully was all this labor [i.e. Homer's], so long considered, hidden under the most naïve fiction. It is like a grandfather who, having brought all his kin together in one family and having seated himself among his grandchildren, is ready to behave like a child with them; he tells his good-natured tales and is careful only to bore no one, not to intimidate by an unbecoming length of instructions but to disseminate and spread them through the tale so that they may all collect them as though playing with them ..., and so that everyone may imperceptibly absorb what he knew and saw better than anyone of his age and time.<sup>44</sup>

Homer as a grandfather telling stories to his grandchildren in the family circle and other members of the household. Gogol had just such a grandfather, one of the heroes of his lost past. The story "St John's Eve" in the volume *Evenings* contains a story within a story. The "internal" story is told by "my grandfather", that is, the grandfather of the first-person narrator who addresses the reader. The first-person narrator conceals the author, Gogol, which is not to say, of course, that the two are identical. The grandfather, to put it simply, conceals grandfather Afanassy, the pseudo-Cossack. "My grandfather (the kingdom of heaven be his! May he have nothing but rolls made of fine wheat and poppy cakes with honey to eat in the other world!) was a great hand at telling stories". What kind of stories did he tell?

... marvelous accounts of the old days, of the raids of the Cossacks, and of the Poles, of the gallant deeds of Podkova, or Poltor-Kozhukh and Sagaydachny, interested us so much as stories of strange things that had happened long ago; they always made our hair stand on end and set us shuddering.<sup>45</sup>

How were these stories told? In exactly the same way as the epic stories of the ancient Greeks were told, in the time when they were preserved and transmitted orally, in the early archaic period of Greek history. Each time a story was told, it was a new version of traditional material, adapted to the audience of that specific moment.

The stories were new versions of old folktales, in which the singers and narrators used fixed formulae, groups of words, phrases, and even combinations of sentences which are typical of oral formulaic poetry. The most familiar are the standard epithets

<sup>44</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 6, p. 228-229; Zeldin, p. 36-37.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, vol 1, p. 46; Kent, vol. 1, p. 34-35.

for certain characters: Odysseus is always "wily Odysseus", Achilles is always "fleet-footed Achilles", the earth is always "the thick-clodded earth", etc. Research by Milman Parry and Albert Lord has shown that poetic narrators from an oral culture absorb such formulae while listening to their teachers, so that, relying on their trained memories, they can re-use these word combinations in a recital. In this way they possess a repertoire of standard narrative forms and phrases which enable them to recite a given story with slight variations.<sup>46</sup> These slight variations are the result of the storyteller's spontaneous creativity in the context of the moment and the situation in which he tells his story.

This was sensationally confirmed by the fieldwork of Parry and Lord in Yugoslavia, where they saw their views on the technique of the Homeric bards corroborated in practice by the *guslari*, Slav singers who accompany their recitals by playing on a simple string instrument (*gusle*). This is very similar to Gogol's blind bandore player.

That Gogol's description of the Ukrainian storytellers was not pure fantasy, but a description of early memories, appears from his portrait of the storyteller Foma Grigorievich on the first page of "St John's Eve" in the volume *Evenings*. A word-seller from the city has written down a story told by Foma Grigorievich and it is read back to him some time later. Foma Grigorievich protests vehemently: that was not at all how he told it, he claims. Albert Lord also once wrote down the story of a Yugoslavian singer, but this time with the knowledge of the storyteller. On account of the parallel with the Homeric technique reconstructed by Parry and Lord, it is interesting to reproduce the whole first page of "St John's Eve" here:

It was a special peculiarity of Foma Grigorievich's that he had a mortal aversion for repeating the same story. It sometimes happened that one persuaded him to tell a story over again, but then he would be bound to add something fresh, or would tell it so differently that you hardly knew it for the same. It happened that one of those people—it is hard for us, simple folk, to know what to call them, for scribes they are not, but they are like the dealers at our fairs: they beg, they grab, they filch all sorts of things and

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Adam Parry, *The Making of Homeric verse. The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, Oxford 1971; Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Cambridge-London 1960; R. Dorson, *The British Folklorists*, London 1968, also mentions parallels from Eastern Europe.

bring out a little book, no thicker than a child's reader, every month or every week—well, one of these gentry got this story out of Foma Grigorievich, though he almost forgot all about it. And then that young gentleman in the pea-green coat of whom I have told you already and whose story, I believe, you have read arrives from Poltava, brings with him a little book, and opening it in the middle, shows it to us. ... As I know how to read after a fashion and do not wear spectacles, I began reading it aloud. I had hardly read two pages when Foma Grigorievich suddenly nudged my arm.

"Wait a minute: tell me first what it is you are reading."

I must admit I was a little taken aback by such a question.

"What am I reading, Foma Grigorievich? Your story, your own words."

"Who told you it was my story?"

"What better proof do you want? It is printed here: 'Told by the sexton of So-and-so.'"

"Hang the fellow who printed that! He's lying, the dog! Is that how I told it? What is one to do when a man has a screw loose in his head? Listen, I'll tell it to you now."

We moved up to the table and he began.<sup>47</sup>

Gogol himself would have none of Friedrich August Wolf, the founder of *klassische Altertumswissenschaft* in Germany, who in 1795 was the first to argue that, in view of the oral nature of early epic poetry in Greece, there cannot have been just one poet named Homer. Following in Wolf's footsteps, various German scholars throughout the nineteenth century attempted with great displays of erudition and cleverness to break down the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into their pre-Homeric components. Gogol was merely contemptuous: "How stupid are those German savants who imagine that Homer is a myth and all his creation popular songs and rhapsodies!"<sup>48</sup>

It is a curious irony of history that today, some hundred and fifty years later, the fundamental correctness of Wolf's theory, after having been demonstrated by Parry and Lord, can be further supported by references to Gogol's work. During Gogol's childhood the Homeric way of telling stories was not yet something which one could only read about in history books. Since his departure to St Petersburg it had become part of his lost past. A lost past which he not only wished to recover by telling what it was like, but also by his form of narrative writing. Seen in this light,

<sup>47</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 1, p. 45-46; Kent, vol. I, p. 33-34.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 6, p. 229; Zeldin, p. 37.



his enthusiasm at the prospect of being appointed at the University of Kiev is much easier to understand, and also, of course, his disappointment when the appointment fell through. His passion for Homer as a storyteller and for Homeric society as the ideal patriarchal society was not something that absorbed him only later in his life, even if it was only in St Petersburg, and through the agency of Pushkin, that he really discovered Homer. This passion was deeply rooted in his childhood, those golden years which were disappearing behind the horizon owing to the rise of "German savants" and our "so-called European 'perfection'".

On 6 June 1836 Gogol left St Petersburg. This date falls precisely between that of Granovsky's departure a month earlier and that of Pecherin's flight a month later. Like Turgenev two years later, all three took the ferry to Travemünde. In this place their ways parted. Pecherin, as I described in the previous chapter, turned more and more away from pagan antiquity; Granovsky, under the influence of his stay in Berlin, developed a well-defined view on the contemporary function of education in ancient history, a view which will be discussed in chapter IX. Gogol, finally, despite his inadequate training, came to attach much more importance to antiquity as a symbol and as an example than Turgenev. Antiquity as a symbol and as an example: the example is Homer and the symbol is Rome.

Gogol had great plans. On 16 June 1836 he wrote to Zhukovsky: "... my present moving away from the fatherland is sent from above by that same Providence which sent down everything for my education. ... I am going to endure want and poverty, and not for anything in the world will I soon return. Longer, longer—as long as possible I will be in an alien world. And although my thoughts, my name, and my works will belong to Russia, I myself, my frail body, will be far removed from it..."<sup>49</sup> The passage expresses a mood similar to Pecherin's at his departure.

For Gogol the road to Rome lay between Cologne and Paris. To his own mind the departure from St Petersburg bore all the characteristics of an escape, an escape from the suffocation of everyday reality, a Platonic quest for a transcendent reality, the

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 7, p. 149; translation: *Letters of Nikolai Gogol* (see above, n. 23), p. 58.

reality of art. After an enforced stay of four or five months in Paris—Italy was suffering from a cholera epidemic—he arrived in Rome only in March 1837. The hypochondriac felt reborn: “Italy is mine, I was born here, Rome, fatherland of my soul! Russia, St Petersburg, the chair, the theatre—it was all just a dream. Now I will devote all my efforts to completing my work”. “No better life than to die in Rome”, he wrote to Pletnyov in November 1837. “Here one is closer to God”. Earlier, on 3 April, he had written to Zhukovsky that he envied and admired the modern Romans—no matter how dim their situation was under the despotic rule of the arch-conservative Pope Gregory XVI—for their “childlike freedom from care”, which made them completely uninterested in anything to do with politics.

He flirted a little with Roman Catholicism, partly under the influence of Adam Mickiewicz, whom he had got to know in Paris and would meet again in Rome. In dating his letters he exchanges the Christian era for the Roman one of Livy: *ab Urbe condita*—“in the year 2588 from the founding of the City”. Late in 1838 and early in 1839 he gave Zhukovsky a guided tour of Rome, when the latter had descended on the city as the escort of the twenty-one-year-old heir to the throne, the later Alexander II, on his grand tour.<sup>50</sup>

Rome would become the city *par excellence* for Gogol. He lived there for about fifty months in the years 1837-1847, the main period being between October 1837 and August 1841. He worked hard. Earlier published work was rewritten: “The Portrait”, *Taras Bulba*. Work in progress was finished: *Dead Souls*. New work was started, if not always completed: in particular the unfinished novel *Annunziata*, of which the fragment *Rome* was published in 1842. At that point in time his most creative period was over.

The protagonist in the story “The Portrait” is the young and gifted artist Chartkov. Once he has achieved the status of celebrated society painter, he is asked, as a respected member of the Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg, to pass judgement on a work of art recently received from Italy by a Russian painter working in Rome. The confrontation with this work suddenly makes Chartkov realize that he has betrayed his artistic vocation with his fashionable artefacts.

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<sup>50</sup> Keil, p. 80-85.

The artist living in Rome in this story is modelled on Gogol's *alter ego* in Rome, the painter Aleksandr Andreevich Ivanov—an artistic kindred soul of the German Nazarenes and just as much a shy hypochondriac as Gogol himself:

This artist was one of his old fellow students, who had from his earliest years cherished a passion for art, had devoted himself to it with the ardent soul of a patient worker, and, tearing himself away from friends, from relations, from cherished habits, had hastened without means to a strange land, where under an exquisite sky the mighty breeding ground of art produces its fruits—to wonderful Rome, of which the name alone makes the ardent heart of the artist beat. In Rome he had buried himself in his work like a hermit and had devoted himself to his task with heart and soul, without allowing himself to be distracted. ...

He was a tireless visitor of the museums, where he could spend hours in front of the works of the great masters, scrutinizing and studying each of their perfect brush-strokes. He did not regard any of his own works as completed until he had tested his own achievement against that of the great teachers and had drawn from their creations many silent and eloquent hints which he used to his own advantage.

He ended up by taking for his teacher one great master only—the divine Raphael, like a great poet who, after reading many works of every kind, full of many wonderful and sublime passages, leaves Homer's *Iliad* on his table as his constant book of reference, having discovered that it contains everything one can wish, and that there is nothing in the whole world that cannot be found in it expressed to perfection. And thus this artist adopted from his school a grand conception of the creative process, an exalted beauty of thought, the powerful fascination of a heavenly brush.<sup>51</sup>

What Raphael was for Aleksandr Ivanov, Homer was for Nikolai Gogol. We know from accounts by people who met him in Rome in this period that Gogol was completely under the spell of Homer's *Iliad*, which he read and reread and declaimed in Gnedich's translation. In the same period he was working on the second edition of *Taras Bulba*.

This second edition was published in 1842 and differs substantially from the first edition of 1835. The character of the tale has become more epic, as the many Homeric elements and reminiscences make clear. The parallelism was directly pointed out in 1842 by Konstantin Aksakov. He was followed by a host of literary

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<sup>51</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 3, p. 107-108; cf. C.R. Proffer, *The Simile and Gogol's "Dead Souls"*, The Hague-Paris 1967, p. 75; Kent, vol. II, p. 281.

researchers—mainly Russians—who knew their Homer.<sup>52</sup> The parallelism consists not only of so-called Homeric similes—"As a hawk, soaring in the sky and circling around and around on its powerful wings, suddenly hovers suspended on one spot and then darts like an arrow on the quail calling to its mate, so Taras' son Ostap pounced on the standard bearer and cast a rope about his neck"—drawing on *Iliad* Book 17, 674-677. There also various points of agreement in the use of sonorous compound epithets; in the narrator's habit of literally repeating what he has just made a certain speaker say; in the description of boastful arguments between two heroes before they actually do battle; in the description of battle and death scenes—"and a heavy mist covered his eyes"—or an army council; in the brief sketches of individual heroes, complete with flashbacks from their earlier lives; in the long catalogues listing only the names of heroes, etc., etc. These are mainly matters which frequently recur in Homer and which belonged therefore to the repertoire of standard "oral formulae" which the epic bards used in their recitals.

As a result of all this, the second edition of *Taras Bulba* is almost twice as long as the first, and although Belinsky already called the first edition "that marvelous epos ... worthy of Homer"<sup>53</sup>, a careful comparison of the both editions shows that the "Homerization" is more extensive in the longer edition. It even struck Sainte-Beuve when Louis Viardot (better known as the husband of Turgenev's great love Pauline Viardot) had a French translation of this version published.<sup>54</sup> I will give one example from dozens. It is the description of how the Cossack hero Kukubenko makes a Polish adversary bite the dust:

And Kukubenko, taking his heavy lance in both hands, drove it right between his blanching lips; the pike knocked out two teeth, white as sugar, cleft the tongue in twain, smashed the neckbone, and drove far into the earth. So he pinned him there to the damp earth forever. The noble blood, crimson as the guelder-rose berry, spurted up in streams and stained his yellow gold-embroidered

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Proffer, *Simile*, esp. ch. xii, p. 166-182; id., "Gogol's *Taras Bulba* and the *Iliad*", *Comparative Literature* (University of Oregon) 17 (1965), p. 142-150; Karlinsky, p. 77-86; Jilek (see above, n. 10 and 18).

<sup>53</sup> Quoted by Proffer, *Simile*, p. 74.

<sup>54</sup> Ch.A. Sainte Beuve, *Premiers lundis*, vol. 3, Paris 1875, p. 32; originally published in *Revue des deux mondes*, 1845, p. 883-889; cf. Proffer, *Simile*, p. 167-168; id., *Comp. Lit.*, p. 142; Jilek, p. 132.

jacket all red. Kukubenko left him and made his way with his Nezamaikovsky Cossacks to another group.<sup>55</sup>

This strongly reminds one of how Idomeneus kills his Greek opponent Erymas in *Iliad* Book 16, 345-350 (translation Richard Lattimore):

Idomeneus stabbed Erymas in the mouth with the pitiless bronze, so that the brazen spearhead smashed its way clean through below the brain in an upward stroke, and the white bones splintered, and the teeth were shaken out with the stroke and both eyes filled up with blood, and gaping he blew a spray of blood through the nostrils and through his mouth, and death in a dark mist closed in about him.

Of course, the similarities are even more conspicuous when one directly compares Gogol's Russian with the Russian of Gnedich's *Iliad*.

While working on the second edition of *Taras Bulba*, Gogol was also completing the first part of *Dead Souls*. It also appeared in 1842, and contains even more traces of his reading of Homer. In one place Gogol has made it easy for his readers by supplying the clue himself:

He [i.e. Chichikov, the main character] was in a hurry, not because he was afraid of being late—he was not afraid of being late, for the president of the court was a good friend of his and could prolong or shorten the sitting just as he liked, like Homer's Zeus, who lengthened the days or made the nights pass more quickly when he had to cut short the battle of his favourite heroes or give them an opportunity to fight to a finish ...<sup>56</sup>

See *Iliad* Book 16, 567-568. Elsewhere idle people are said to "burden the earth without being of any use to anybody". This is literally what Achilles says about himself when lamenting the death of Patroclus to his mother in *Iliad* Book 18, 104: "[I] sit here beside my ships, a useless weight on the good land".

In the very first chapter of *Dead Souls* Chichikov is invited to a ball at the house of the governor. Gogol's description of the men at this party is a splendid example of a long-drawn-out Homeric simile:

As he entered the ballroom, Chichikov had for a moment to screw up his eyes, dazzled by the blaze of the candles, the lamps, and the

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<sup>55</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 2, p. 110; Kent, vol. II, p. 86-87.

<sup>56</sup> Gogol, *Dead Souls*, transl. Magarshack, p. 149.

ladies' gowns. Everything was flooded in light. Black frock-coats glided and flitted about singly or in swarms here and there like so many flies on a sparkling white sugar-loaf on a hot July day when the old housekeeper chops and breaks it up into glittering lumps in front of an open window, the children gather round and look on, watching with interest the movements of her rough hands raising and lowering the hammer, while the aerial squadrons of flies, borne on the light breeze, fly in boldly, just as if they owned the place and, taking advantage of the old woman's feeble eyesight and the sunshine that dazzles her eyes, cover the dainty lumps in small groups or in swarms. Already satiated by the abundant summer, which sets up dainty dishes for them on every step, they fly in not so much to eat as to display themselves, to stroll up and down the pile of sugar, to rub their hind legs or their front feet together, or to scratch themselves under their wings, or, stretching out both their front legs, to rub their heads with them, then turn round and fly out again, and again fly in with new tiresome squadrons.<sup>57</sup>

These flies are direct descendants of the flies in *Iliad* Book 2, 470-473, which swarm about the milk pails in spring when the cattle are being milked in the stalls. At the same time they are descendants of the flies from Gogol's lost past, when he himself was among the children gathered round to watch the rough hands of an old peasant woman above a sugar-loaf. The gentlemen in their black frock-coats as flies and the ladies as glittering lumps, and Gogol at such a ball thinking of the old couple from "Old-World Landowners": "I can see their faces sometimes even now among fashionable dress coats in the noise and crowd, and then I sink into a half-dreaming state, and the past rises up before me".<sup>58</sup>

Let us place ourselves in the position of Gogol while he was writing *Dead Souls*. He had a plot, and he devised a plan. According to his own account, Pushkin presented him with the idea for the plot: a villainous character, Chichikov, buys "dead souls" from landowners throughout the country. These dead souls are dead serfs whose death has not been officially registered on the lists showing how many serfs each landowner possesses. The landowners find Chichikov's interest in dead souls peculiar, but on the other hand they can see the advantage of the deal, for with a bill of sale in their possession they can obtain a tax deduction, since

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24.

<sup>58</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 2, p. 8; Kent, vol. II, p. 2.

the amount of tax they have to pay depends on the number of serfs officially registered under their name. Now in the Russia of Nicholas I (as for that matter in the Roman Empire of Constantine the Great) a kind of census was in fact carried out every ten years, to determine how many souls, in the sense of serfs (the Russian word for soul, *dusha*, can also mean serf) each landowner possessed, and for the next ten years his tax assessment was then computed on the basis of this officially registered number of souls, until the next census. Of course, in the meantime deaths (and births) were continually occurring, but these were only taken into account at the next census. But if somebody bought or sold souls in the meantime, these *were* immediately added to or deducted from the tax assessment. A landowner therefore benefited from selling dead souls who were still alive on paper. But who was foolish enough to buy these dead souls? Chichikov had found a purpose for them: he would be able to use the souls bought by him as a surety for obtaining a loan from the authorities. This aspect of the plot is not worked out in the novel, just as the plot in general does not really unfold into a story with a development.

But although Gogol did not develop a plot, he did develop a plan in the course of his work on *Dead Souls*. This plan was not realized either, since what we have, as I said before, is the first part of what was to be a grand trilogy after the example of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, in which the sinfulness of the main character and of the world in general would finally change for the better via a process of purgation (part II) and would culminate in the paradise of a perfect patriarchal society (part III). Chichikov and everything described in the book are the symbol and allegory of Russia's development as a whole. Gogol's unrealized plan with the completed trilogy was to show the Russians their shortcomings and at the same time guide them prophetically towards the ideal society of the future, something which Homer, according to Gogol—see earlier on in this chapter—did succeed in doing.

If his *Dead Souls* was to “work” as an allegory for Russia as a whole, it was of essential importance, Gogol believed, that *all* aspects of Russia would be represented in it, just as the *Odyssey* covered the entire ancient world, “all spheres in which the people of that time moved, with their skills, their knowledge, and their religious ideas”. One can find several statements by Gogol in

which he insists that "the whole of Russia" will be dealt with in his book.<sup>59</sup> But how can a writer who is writing a book set in the country, where a devious character is ridding landowners of their dead souls, contrive to deal with, for instance, life in St Petersburg or the doings of learned professors, which are also aspects of Russia as a whole? To achieve his goal he simply *must* continually digress, abandon the thread of his story, move the camera as it were. And this is precisely what strikes every reader of *Dead Souls*: the constant shifting of the centre of attention.

The continual superimposition of images is also characteristic of Homer, and this is what makes Homer such an inexhaustible fund of ideas for Gogol's own images and compositional techniques. One of the poetic devices frequently used by Homer to achieve the effect of superimposition is the Homeric simile. This is not just an ordinary comparison, such as "I feel like a wet rag" or "he's as thick as a brick". No, the element which is introduced to make the comparison ("wet rag", "brick") becomes a peg on which to hang a story, conjuring up for the reader a completely self-contained tableau within the frame of the main plot. In principle these tableaux may be drawn from all aspects of life: social intercourse, the animal world, natural phenomena, and so forth. It is not an easy technique, and only great writers know how to use it skilfully. In the world of orally transmitted poetry it was probably easier to apply, given the presence of a "stock" and a repertoire, than in the world of modern writing and the modern system of literary values, with its extreme appreciation of "originality" and "creativity". At any rate in this world the phenomenon of the Homeric simile occurs much less frequently.

It is above all in *Taras Bulba* and in *Dead Souls* that Gogol patterned himself on Homer. Notably Carl Proffer has shown that this patterning is considerably more extensive in *Dead Souls* than in *Taras Bulba*. But it follows from what I just said about Gogol's *intention* with his *Dead Souls*—an allegory of "Russia as a whole"—that one does not get a complete idea of the differences between these works in their use of Homer if one adopts a purely quantitative approach, for instance by simply counting the number of Homeric similes in the two works, as has in fact been done. For there is also a difference in function: in *Taras Bulba* Gogol had no

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<sup>59</sup> Proffer, *Simile*, p. 81.



need to describe a totality. The comparisons there are in fact closer to Homer: it is mainly *imitatio*, it is something which evidently gives Gogol literary pleasure. But in *Dead Souls* Gogol is concerned with the totality and he is compelled, while maintaining the Homeric *manner*, to look for points of comparison deriving more from Russian life: *imitatio* becomes more *aemulatio* or, if one likes, Gogol becomes more original.

The logical conclusion of what has been set out here is that with his *Dead Souls* Gogol apparently wished to establish himself as the Russian Homer. Indeed, as the Russian Homer-and-Dante in one! Aksakov already realized this in 1842, when he called *Dead Souls* a modern version of Homer. Others, Belinsky, for instance, could only laugh at all this business about Gogol being Homer the Second.<sup>60</sup> But in doing so they lacked insight. They would have known better than to laugh if they had looked properly at the title page of the first edition of *Dead Souls*. The typography of this page was designed by Gogol himself (he could do that too). Besides the name of the author and the date 1842 it lists three titles: (1) *Chichikov's Adventures*; (2) *Dead Souls*; (3) *Poema*. The first title was added on the advice of the censor, Aleksandr Nikitenko: *Dead Souls* alone was unacceptable, for was not the human soul immortal? *Poema* means "poem", more specifically "*epic poem*". The three titles are executed in different types: the first in the smallest type, two millimetres; the second somewhat larger, five millimetres; the third—*POEMA*—the largest: *nine* millimetres! *Dead Souls* is not a story, it is not a novel, not even a picaresque novel. It is an epic.

Finally, also in 1842, the publication—despite the author's resistance—of a first fragment, entitled *Rome*, of the unfinished novel *Annunziata*.<sup>61</sup> Nothing more would ever be produced than this one fragment. It does not belong to the works which have made Gogol famous and classic, and yet it is a classic formulation of the spell which the Eternal City on the Tiber cast on Gogol (and on so many others). In Gogol this formulation is clearly Platonic—one should not forget that he also started his writing career with the

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 67 and 71.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Lucy Vogel, "Gogol's *Rome*", *The Slavic and East European Journal* 11 (1967), p. 145-158; L. Pedrotti, "The Architecture of Love in Gogol's 'Rome'", *California Slavic Studies* 6 (1971), p. 17-27; Karlinsky, p. 209-210.

Platonic work *Woman*. The main character in *Rome*, or rather the character around whom the action revolves, is a woman. She is not just any woman, no, she is the perfect, ideal woman. She is called *Annunziata*, "the Announced One", and Gogol did not choose this name at random.

The annoying thing about a perfect and ideal woman is that she does not exist in perceptible reality and is therefore by definition beyond reach. She exists only in the metaphorical world of ideas. She is a Platonic *eidos*, and this word is linguistically related to the Greek word *eidolon*, which often has the connotation of "illusion" or "hallucination": divine image and idolatrous image in one, in short: idol. *Annunziata* is not an idol, but an *eidos*. She cannot be touched. If she were to become tangible, she would no longer be part of metaphysical reality and therefore no longer ideal and perfect. Only the fortunate, and artists believe themselves more fortunate in this regard than common mortals, can occasionally glimpse her through the mists of the sublunary sphere, just as Moses could only see the Promised Land from afar. She is destined to remain, like that land for Moses, something that is promised, announced: *Annunziata*. This, then, is the *Annunziata* of Gogol's *Rome*.

Once again there is no plot, just the rudiments of one. During carnival a wealthy Roman prince sees a beautiful girl among the people in the streets. He follows her, but she is swallowed up by the crowds, like Garance—"je suis la verité"—in the final scene of *Les Enfants du Paradis*. The girl is described from head to toe, and the description is more the description of a walking statue than of a woman of flesh and blood. "Everything in her recalls those ancient times when marble came to life and the sculptor's chisels flashed. ... From whatever side she might turn the lustrous snow of her face towards you, her image would always be engraved in your heart. ... Everything about her is the peak of perfection, from her shoulders to her classical, 'breathing' leg. ... She would serve as a marvellous model for Diana, for proud Juno, for the seductive Graces".<sup>62</sup> As if we had not already guessed:

Only the ancient sculptors had been capable of preserving the high idea of beauty in their statues. It was a peerless beauty, created in order to dazzle all men, without exception. It did not

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<sup>62</sup> Gogol, *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 3, p. 205-206.

involve any special taste: here all tastes were to be united; all men were to bow to it: both believers and unbelievers would sink to their knees for her, as for a sudden divine apparition. ...

She is a Roman, Such a woman could be born only in Rome. I must see her without fail. I want to see her, not to love her, no—I only want to look at her, to look at all of her, her eyes, her hands, her fingers, her gleaming hair. Not to kiss her—I only want to gaze upon her. And why not? For this is as it should be, it is the natural order of things. She has no right to conceal and remove her beauty. Perfect beauty is given to the world so that every man may preserve the idea of beauty forever in his heart.<sup>63</sup>

This is Plato and *Woman* all over again. Telecles has learned his lesson.

The prince decides to deal with the problem in a professional way and immediately hires a detective. The latter asks the prince how he can be of service. At that moment the detective and the prince are standing in the little square near San Pietro in Montorio, still a famous point for looking out over the city, which is surging below them in the colours and sounds of carnival. "And at that moment the prince let his gaze travel over the city of Rome and the words stuck in his throat: in an enthralling, radiant panorama the Eternal City lay spread out before his feet". The visionary description of this view occupies an entire page. The final lines are:

The sun was sinking lower toward the earth. Its brilliance upon the whole architectural mass became rosier and warmer. The city kept on becoming closer and more animated; the pines loomed darker. The mountains kept on turning bluer and more phosphorous. The heavens became ever more solemn and on the point of dying away. ... Lord, what a view! The prince, embraced by it, forgot himself and Annunziata's beauty and the mysterious destiny of his people and everything that is on this earth.<sup>64</sup>

But the prince does not forget the beauty of Annunziata for long. Later we encounter him again, not in the city, but in the country village where she lives, just outside Rome. There she walks, Annunziata, "and all those who meet her stand still as if pinned to the ground".

But who is it that stares after her more than anyone else? Who is it that catches her every word, follows all her movements to the

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 236 and 238.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 247.

very stirrings of her thoughts in her face? It is a young man aged twenty-five, a Roman prince, ... a proud youth.<sup>65</sup>

The prince is clearly Gogol himself. The story of his life is a fictionalized autobiography of Gogol himself. The parallels with the non-fictional autobiographical information from his letters are manifold.

The prince has been brought up in an aristocratic style (Nezhin!), under "the inane guidance" of a "strict classicist". "It goes without saying the young prince could acquire little knowledge from this source". He learns no more than that Latin was the mother language of Italian, and he is therefore not "like the foreigner who has sold his heart only to Titus Livius and Tacitus, who is concerned only with the ancients, who brushes all other things aside, and who seems inclined, in a fit of noble pedantry, to dig up the whole new city—no, he liked *everything*".

To complete his studies, the prince goes to Paris. At first he admires everything he sees—"he was in Europe!" After a while the cheap glamour of this make-believe world starts to fill him with boredom and finally he is so repelled that his only wish is to leave. "The exalted and noble idea could nowhere find support [Plato again, MAW]. There was no lack of intimations of thoughts, but thoughts themselves were conspicuously absent; everywhere one found half-hearted passions, but true passion was lacking, everything was half and half".<sup>66</sup>

The prince returns to Italy. The country and the cities are passionately described, recalling Gogol's own journey from Paris to Rome in the spring of 1837. Italy then reminded him of the Ukraine. From a letter to a friend, 15 April 1837: "Here you find exactly the same dilapidated doors, the antique candelabras and the lamps look exactly like those in our churches. Everywhere else everything is changing, but here time has brought everything to a standstill. It seems as if I am visiting a few old land-owners in the Ukraine here! Everything here is old-fashioned". Gogol is happy, he feels at home.

In a euphoric mood he travels through the Apennines, and then finally, after a journey of six days, he sees, in the radiant distance, against a cloudless sky, the dome of St Peter's. "O! what

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 206.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 207-208, 222, 209, 216.

a storm of feelings sprang up in his breast!" Ponte Molle and Piazza del Popolo, Monte Pincio and Villa Borghese, Piazza Colonna and Palazzo Doria. "Here no philosophizing about falling stock prices, here one could listen to conversations about a recently discovered ancient statue ..." He steepes himself in the Roman and Italian past.

And now all of this had disappeared, it was suddenly over, everything had petrified like cooled-down lava and had even been banished from Europe's memory like old, useless rubbish.

"But would this fame really never return?", the prince wonders. "Are there no ways of recovering the past?"<sup>67</sup> This question brings tears to his eyes. "But at the same time his soul was moved by a consoling, exalted thought, and with another, higher intuition he realized that Italy was not yet done for".<sup>68</sup>

After all, by virtue of its antiquity and ruins alone, Italy holds absolute sway in today's world; the mighty wonders of its architecture remain and stand as phantoms in the country to reproach Europe for its Chinese, shoddy luxury and the miniature-like fragmentation of its thought. And this astounding collection of perished worlds, together with the charm brought about by their fusion with an ever-flowering nature,—all this exists to shake the world awake, to allow the inhabitant of the North occasionally to form a picture of the South, as in a dream, to wrench him away, through this dream, from a cold life filled with deeds which harden the heart,—to wrench him away from all those things by suddenly enchanting his view with a distantly receding perspective, with a moonlit night at the Colosseum, with a refulgence in the heavens never yet beheld and the burning kisses of the wondrous sky,—so that at least once in his human life he has been able to give himself up to beauty ...

In such a solemn moment he discerned in all things the germs of eternal life, of a better future which the eternal Creator prepares eternally for the world.

A better future. The future of the lost past. "Italy, fatherland of my soul", Gogol had written in April 1838 to Mariya Balabina. And in *Woman*, 1830: "What is love? It is the homeland of the soul, man's yearning for the past".

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 219, 226, 228.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 229-230.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE TWO SIDES OF IVAN GONCHAROV

While Turgenev was at odds with his Latin and his German professors, Ivan Goncharov was occupied with an entirely different question: "Is it Good or Bad to Live in the World?" This is the title of an essay which he wrote somewhere in the 1840's.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays the midlife crisis, which manifests itself in men who want to do something about the world and life, takes place somewhere around their fortieth birthday. A hundred and fifty years ago, it seems, this crisis burst out shortly after their thirtieth birthday. At any rate, the case of Goncharov brings this to mind irresistibly.

To say Goncharov is to say *Oblomov*. But Goncharov wrote two other novels besides *Oblomov*. They were published at great intervals: 1846 *A Common Story*; 1859 *Oblomov*; 1869 *The Precipice*. It should be noted, however, that they were all conceived in the 1840's (Goncharov was born in 1812) and that all three of them are fairly autobiographical. The main character is always a figure who sees his high, romantic and sunny expectations of life disappear into the shadows of the valleys of disillusion. Furthermore, three "letters" were published in 1848 under the title *Letters of a Friend from the Capital to a Bridegroom in the Country*.<sup>2</sup> In 1849 *Oblomov's Dream* appeared as a separate publication.<sup>3</sup> It was published again ten years later as chapter nine of the first part of *Oblomov*.

What was it like to be "Living in the World"? Good or Bad? Well, Goncharov thought it was Good *and* Bad. Life has two sides, after all, according to Goncharov, and in due course both of them get a chance, at least if one does not behave too foolishly. One of these two sides is the side in which one *has to do* all sorts of things. In this sector reason rules. "Man brings a lot of sacrifices

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<sup>1</sup> First published in E.A. Lyatsky, *Roman i zhizn. Razvitie tvorcheskoi lichnosti I.A. Goncharova. Zhizn i byt, 1812-1857*, Prague 1925, p. 119-125; reprinted in A.G. Tseitlin, *I.A. Goncharov*, Moscow 1950, p. 445-449.

<sup>2</sup> *Sovremennik* 1848, No. 12, published under the name A. Chelsky; reprinted in I.A. Goncharov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, komm. A.G. Tseitlina, vol. 7, Moscow (Biblioteka Ogoniyok) 1952.

<sup>3</sup> *Sovremennik* 1849, No. 4: "Oblomov's Dream. Episode from an Unfinished Novel".

to this despot, many of the best moments in his life". The other side is the side of feeling, the heart, beauty. "You do not have to live for the other here, here you live entirely for yourself". Goncharov here is the realist who does not want to forget about romanticism completely, or the romantic who realises that there is such a thing as reality. According to him, those who see only one of those two sides make life harder and more miserable than it is.

This dichotomy can regularly be found in Goncharov's work.<sup>4</sup> In this chapter I will focus on a number of passages which show that Goncharov's references to classical antiquity always occur in his descriptions of moments and situations that are part of the romantic side, the side of feeling and the heart. From these references it appears furthermore that the realist Goncharov rates the (novelistic) characters who are exclusively concerned with the romantic side, for instance because of their obsession with the "beauty" of classical antiquity, among those who make life unnecessarily hard and miserable. The references to classical antiquity stem partly from reality, but seem to have a symbolical function as well.

Aleksandr Aduev, the main character of *A Common Story*, is in love. He dreams sweet dreams and walks on clouds. His uncle Pyotr Ivanych thinks this is exaggerated and unsensible. He knows how these dreams end: on a certain morning you wake up, you see your face in the mirror, and you sense that it is over. But cousin Aleksandr has not arrived at that point yet, he is completely mesmerized. In the excitement of his infatuation he blots a letter to his beloved. This makes him even more nervous. How to remove this stain?

He started to scratch, polish and rub until he had made a hole in the letter. The table was shaking with all that rubbing and touched the étagère. On the étagère stood a bust of Italian alabaster, of Sophocles or Aeschylus. Because of the shock, the great writer of tragedies swung to and fro on his pedestal at first and then crashed down from the étagère and fell into pieces.<sup>5</sup>

It is not only the bust of Sophocles or Aeschylus that falls to pieces. Anyway, the thing was standing on a shaky pedestal. "I sense

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Milton Ehre, *Oblomov and his Creator. The Life and Art of Ivan Goncharov*, Princeton 1973, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> I.A. Goncharov, "Obyknovennaya istoriya", *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, Moscow (Gosud. izd.) 1952, p. 70.

that you are going to break a lot of other things",<sup>6</sup> Uncle Pyotr remarks. And this is exactly what happens. At the end of the book many an infatuation has fallen to pieces and Aleksandr has become just as businesslike and cynical as his uncle, who had his own romantic dreams during adolescence for that matter. The bust was standing on Uncle Pyotr's *étagère*. Possibly as a monument to *his* lost illusions.

A *Common Story* is a typical *Bildungsroman*. Cousin Aleksandr comes to St Petersburg as a country bumpkin. He has already obtained a university degree somewhere and now he is going to set his hand to the plough and serve humanity diligently with noble pursuits.

Aleksandr had arrived at Admiralty Square and was perplexed. He remained standing in front of the Bronze Horseman for an hour, not with bitter remorse like poor Evgeny, but in ecstasy. He gazed at the Neva, the buildings that lied along it, and his eyes started to sparkle. He suddenly felt ashamed because of his preference for front-yards and rundown fences. ... New life opened its arms to him and lured him to the unknown. His heart pounded. He dreamt of noble work, of high aspirations, and walked across the Nevsky Prospekt with an important expression on his face.<sup>7</sup>

Uncle Pyotr finds that his pupil has a lot to learn. To start with, he has to break a lot of habits. Uncle criticizes his cousin's way of talking. He thinks it "may be good, but a bit pompous". Cousin is surprised and a bit confused: "Our aesthetics professor talked like this, and he was considered the most eloquent teacher",<sup>8</sup> he objects. He shows his uncle some notes of his university lectures. "Allow me to read you a few pages of Professor Ivan Semyonich on Greek art". He shows his lay-out for a dissertation as well. "This project has been presented to a prominent man, an advocate of enlightenment; because of this project he has asked the dean and me for dinner". Uncle is not interested in Professor Ivan Semyonich's lectures and his research projects for Ph.D. students cannot excite him either: "Ha! One of those projects that were carried out a thousand years ago already, or cannot or should not be carried out at all".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 74.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 38-39.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 54.



Goncharov had an aesthetics professor himself: Nikolai Nadezhdin, the man who kindled his enthusiasm for Winckelmann and his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*. Goncharov had even translated that book into Russian, and subsequently thrown his translation away.

More than two years later cousin Aleksandr is a man. "His features had matured and his face expressed character". He knows how to dress and how to behave. But some things have disappeared as well, which is observed with some nostalgia: "The childishly soft lines of his face, the transparant softness of his skin, the down on his chin". "And so have the timid shyness and the gracious clumsiness of his movements, ... the lilies and the roses". "The prior enthusiasm on Aleksandr's face had been tempered by a touch of melancholy, the first sign of suspicion that had crept into his soul".<sup>10</sup>

Almost hundred and fifty pages further Aleksandr has fallen in love again. The first love had turned out a mistake, and now there was Julia. A dreamy type, whose heart—according to the "realistic" judgement of the narrator—was overdeveloped and whose intellect was underdeveloped. Who were responsible for this unbalanced development? The teachers who had educated her. That education is then lightly ridiculed by Goncharov in a playful and friendly manner. Julia had been taught French and Greek mythology by a Frenchman called Poulet:

She knew who Voltaire was and she sometimes attributed *Les martyrs* to him, whereas she pinned the *Dictionnaire philosophique* on Chateaubriand. From mythology she liked the comedy that takes place between Mars, Volcanus and Venus very much. At first she was on Volcanus' side, but when she discovered that he was lame and clumsy and a blacksmith too, she immediately chose Mars' side. She was fond of the myth of Jupiter and Semele as well, and of Apollo's exile and his boyish pranks on earth; she took it all literally, without the slightest idea of a deeper meaning behind the stories. God knows whether that Frenchman did so himself! On her questions on religion and antiquity he frowned and answered solemnly: "Des bêtises! Mais cette bête de Vulcain devait avoir une drôle de mine ... écoutez", he added with slightly narrowed eyes, while he patted her hand, "que feriez-vous à la place de Vénus?" She did not answer, but for the first time in her life she blushed without knowing why.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 63.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 200-201.

That makes cousin Aleksandr, forty-five now and reasonably pragmatic, think of his own youth:

Well, I too have once learnt a thing or two, I remember Latin and Roman history. I can recall that they had a consul, what-is-his-name, Heaven knows! I remember too that we read those poems: *Beatus ille* ... and then? *Puer, pueri, puero* ... No, it was not like that, Heaven knows I have lost it all. We only learn to forget. Let them say what they like, but I maintain that no human being, none of those high civil servants and intelligent fellows, can tell who was that consul or in what year the Olympic Games took place, so we learn because we ought to! Because then they can tell from the look in your eyes that you have studied. You cannot help forgetting: later on in the big world no one mentions these things anymore; and if anyone did, I think they would probably tear him to shreds!<sup>12</sup>

The love for Julia cools down. The girl, as romantic as ever, is upset, but Aleksandr wants nothing more to do with women. And he goes out fishing, together with a peevish fellow who has taught him how to cook sauerkraut and tripe (at least that is useful) and always greedily opens the newspaper in search of fatal accidents full of high drama and similar tales of misery.

Once, they are addressed at the waterside by a father, who happens to be walking there with his charming daughter. Aleksandr does not know them, so he calls them Oedipus and Antigone. He behaves boorishly, because he smells trouble and he does not want to fall in love again. But the girl has already read the thoughtfulness on his face. "She did not even fail to notice the trace of melancholy".<sup>13</sup> Antigone turns out to be called Liza, and she loves him without exaggerated adoration, but again it does not work out. Aleksandr takes his fishing rod elsewhere. Uncle Pyotr has completed his education. His wife, Aleksandr's aunt, tries in vain to soften him, "be the old Aleksandr again".<sup>14</sup> At least she has not lost all feeling.

Epilogue. Four years later, Pyotr Ivanych, plunged in thought, is watching his wife. He is thinking of the days gone by, when reason had not yet triumphed on all fronts. He notices that his wife is not looking very well, and her pitiful appearance revives for a short while the last remains of his suppressed feelings. Pyotr

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 204-205.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 236.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 255.

Ivanych associates his memory of the old days, when she was still young, with classical antiquity. The passage is a moving one:

... what was it that the doctor found remarkable in her? Anybody who saw her for the first time would have considered her a woman among many in St Petersburg. Pale, that is true: her expression was dull; her blouse fell loosely and smoothly over her narrow shoulders and her flat breast; her movements were slow, nearly languid. ... But are our beauties known for their blushes, their glistening eyes and their fiery movements then? And the comeliness of forms ... Neither Phidias nor Praxiteles would have found the Venus for their chisel here.

Nay, one shouldn't look for sculptural beauty in northern women: they are no statues, they have never offered themselves for the antique poses in which the beauty of Greek women was eternalized and it is even impossible to depict them in those poses. ... They do not possess that flawless regularity of physical features. ... Sensuality is not radiated from her eyes in fiery rays, around her half-parted lips there is not that naive sensual smile that makes the southern woman's mouth glow. Our women have been imparted with a different, more sublime beauty. That pensive glow in her eyes can not be caught by the chisel, nor can the battle between will and passion, the game of unmouthed movements of the soul, with those uncountable subtle nuances of shyness, of feigned indifference, anger and kind-heartedness, of concealed joy and suffering, ... of all those lightning bolts that are loosened from the concentric soul. ... No matter what, someone who saw Lizaveta Aleksandrovna for the first time, would not notice any desperation in her. Only someone who used to know her, who remembered the freshness of her face, and the glow of her expression that made the colour of her eyes so hard to discover—so drowned were they in the exuberant, flickering waves of light—someone who recollected her voluptuous breast and ample shoulders, would look at her with painful surprise now, his heart would shrink with pity if she meant anything to him, possibly like, though he did not dare to confess, Pyotr Ivanych's heart was shrinking now.<sup>15</sup>

No matter how northern Lizaveta Aleksandrovna was now, she used to look like a southern woman all right, and one whose charming looks would have made Phidias or a Praxiteles reach for his chisel.

The second letter from the *Letters of a Friend from the Capital to a Bridegroom in the Country* is addressed to a bookworm who is totally estranged from ordinary life. He lives completely in Graeco-

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 300-301.

Roman antiquity and reads only Latin and Greek. The sender of the letter teases him a little on account of that, but on the other hand shows his admiration for the classics. At the same time he criticizes the way in which the classical scholars of his time deal with them. He thinks that, with all their pedantic scholarship, they do not understand Homer, Plato and Virgil at all: pearls cast before the swine.

The provincial classicist is not put off by this, however. He stays as naive as ever and is not even upset when his town friend tricks him out of two thousand roubles. He remains the same friendly man, a man of feeling who does not get overexcited about his materialistic friend's devious trick.<sup>16</sup>

In *Oblomov's Dream*, Oblomov sees himself transferred to a peaceful and friendly country, which is described in highly bucolic terms. It is the country of the Oblomov family, Oblomov's native country. There are no wild animals, in the fields and villages one sees only "ruminating cows" and "cackling hens". There are a lot of quails too. "Do not imagine, though, that quails are regarded here as a refined delicacy. Such moral decay is unknown here, a quail is a bird not destined to be eaten".<sup>17</sup> The people in this country are without passion or valour. They live their lives in peace and quiet, far away from other human beings. "At certain times the peasants bring their corn to the nearest landing-stage of the Volga, which was their Colchis or their Pillars of Hercules", references to the world of Greek mythology.<sup>18</sup>

The inhabitants of the country called Oblomovka know that the administrative capital of the province is eighty werst away, but very few of them ever go there. They know that there must be other cities further away, they have heard of St Petersburg and Moscow, of the French and the Germans who live even further away. "But beyond that lies a dim world, as mysterious to them as it was to the ancients, unknown countries inhabited by monsters, two-headed creatures, giants; further away still there was dark-

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<sup>16</sup> See note 2; cf. V. Setchkarev, *Ivan Goncharov. His Life and His Works*, Würzburg 1974, p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> Ivan Goncharov, *Oblomov*, translated and with an introduction by David Magarshack, Harmondsworth (Penguin) 1981, p. 105-106. (N.B.: the quotations given here are not always according to Magarshack's translation).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 107.

ness, and at the end of it all was the fish which held the world on its back".<sup>19</sup>

An extremely picturesque childhood is described in the dream. Ilya Ilich Oblomov's childhood. "Later, when he has grown up, he knows that there are no rivers of milk and honey and no fairy-queens, and he makes mild fun of these old tales. But his smile is not sincere. It is accompanied by a secret longing. Fairy-tale and reality intermingle, and unconsciously he mourns the fact that the fairy-tale is not life and life no fairy-tale".<sup>20</sup> The nurse tells him the story of the Fire Bird, the Russian version of the Golden Fleece, and she translates the heroic deeds of the "Russian Achilles and Odysseus—Ilya Muromets, Dobryna Nikitich, Alyosha Popovich, etc."—she tells "of wicked robbers, sleeping beauties, towns and people turned to stone; finally, she passed on to our demonology, ghosts and spectres, monsters and werewolves".

With Homer's simplicity and good humour and his eye for vivid detail and concrete imagery, she filled the boy's memory and imagination with the Iliad of Russian life, created by our Homers in the far-off days when man was not yet able to stand up to the dangers and mysteries of life and nature, when he trembled at the thought of werewolves and wood-demons and sought Alyosha Popovich's help against the adversities threatening him on all sides, and when the air, water, forests and plains were full of marvels.<sup>21</sup>

Ilya Ilich goes to school. He is thirteen or fourteen years old. Every now and then his father reads aloud from a three-year-old newspaper. He is not impressed, this father, by the news coverage. "They write from The Hague that it has pleased His Majesty to return to his palace after a short journey. ... And here they write that the works of Madame de Genlis have been translated into Russian; ... which they do of course to extract some money from us gentry".<sup>22</sup> But time waits for no man:

The proverb "Knowledge is light and ignorance is darkness" was already penetrating into the big and small villages together with the books sold by pedlars.

Oblomov's parents saw the advantages of education for their child, but only the material advantages. They saw that it was only

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 108.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 119.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 120.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 138.

education that made it possible for people to make a career, that is, to acquire rank, decorations and money; that old-fashioned lawyers, case-hardened and corrupt officials, who had grown old in their pettifogging ways and chicaneries, were having a bad time. Ominous rumours were abroad that not only reading and writing, but all sorts of hitherto unheard-of subjects were required. A gulf opened up between the higher and the lower grades of civil servants which could be bridged only by something called a diploma. ... Oblomov's parents understood all this, grasped the importance of education, but only these obvious advantages. They had only the vaguest and remotest ideas of the intrinsic need of education, and that was why they wanted to obtain for their son some of its brilliant advantages.

They dreamed of a gold-embroidered uniform for him, they imagined him as a Councillor at Court, and his mother even imagined him as a Governor of a province. But they wanted to obtain this as cheaply as possible, by all sorts of tricks, by secretly dodging the rocks and obstacles scattered on the path of learning and honours, without bothering to jump over them—that is, for instance, by working a little, not by physical exhaustion or the loss of the blessed plumpness acquired in childhood. All they wanted was that their son should merely comply with the prescribed rules and regulations and obtain in some way or other a certificate which said that their darling Ilya had mastered all the arts and sciences.<sup>23</sup>

And so, one day, Ivan Aleksandrovich Goncharov—one of many—travelled to Moscow to enroll in the university there. The dream was over. We learn more about Ilya Oblomov's stay at the university—Moscow!—in chapter 6 of the first part. He had taken up his studies very reluctantly and moaned and groaned loudly over his books. "What is the purpose of all those writings? What was the use of textbooks?"

It is noticeable that Greek art and classical literature are absent amongst the subjects that are mentioned as the summit of boredom. Algebra, geometry, political economics, national economics, history, they are all equally boring, useless and depressing to him. No philosophy for Ilya either. Only poetry found a different judgement:

The poets, on the other hand, touched him to the quick: like everyone else, he became young again. He, too, reached the happy time of life, which never fails anyone and which smiles upon all, the time when one's powers are at their height, when one is conscious of life and full of hope and desire to do good, to

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 141.

show one's prowess to work, when one's heart beats faster and the pulse quickens. But the flower of life opened up and bore no fruit. ... So ended Oblomov's career as a student, ... our hero did not think it necessary to extend the field of his knowledge. His head was a complicated archive of past deeds, persons, epochs, figures, religions, disconnected political, economic, mathematical and other truths, problems, principles, and so on. It was like a library composed entirely of odd volumes of various branches of knowledge. His studies had a strange effect on Oblomov; there was for him a gulf between life and learning which he never attempted to cross. To him life was one thing and learning another. ... He began to ponder about the purpose of his life, and at last discovered that it was in himself that he had to look for its secret.<sup>24</sup>

*Obломotivis*, total apathy, strikes. His friend Stolz tries everything to get him going. "Be your old self again", he calls out to him, "think of your impetuosity and your plans of ten years ago". Oblomov does indeed remember, after much thinking, that they had planned to travel across Europe then, "to scorch our feet on Vesuvius and go down to Herculaneum", and that he had been moved to tears at the sight of an engraving of the Apollo Belvedere and that it had been his deepest wish to set foot on the soil of Rome and see the originals of all those famous works of art. He remembers that they were to go to Germany together and continue their studies there. But Stolz had left for Bonn, Jena and Erlangen without Oblomov. Stolz warns Oblomov: "If you stay here, you will fare just like that man Tarantiev and you will be lost then".<sup>25</sup>

Tarantiev is one of Oblomov's neighbours in the country. About forty years old and full of contempt for everything and everybody around him, he is a completely ill-mannered man. Just like Oblomov he had had a father who discovered at a certain moment that it would be advantageous to have his son educated. And so he had made him study Latin with a priest for three years. Just when things were starting to shape up (Tarantiev was naturally talented) and he was on the verge of studying Cornelius Nepos in Latin, his father thought it was enough. Further university education would only harm him. The young Tarantiev did not know how to use his modest bit of Latin and started to forget it. He had obtained a job in St Petersburg where he had no use for his

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 68-70.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 180-182.

knowledge of Latin either and had thus buried himself on his country estate:

And yet he was conscious of a dormant force inside him, locked up through hostile circumstances without hope of ever breaking out, as evil spirits in fairy-tales were deprived of their powers of doing harm by being imprisoned in enchanted dungeons. Quite likely it was this consciousness of the powers wasted within him which made Tarantiev so rude, malevolent, perpetually angry and abusive.<sup>26</sup>

Andrei Stolz is Oblomov's counterpart in every way. Son of a German father and a Russian mother, he was born and raised in a village where his father was a bailiff. He was one of those boys whom grown-ups see coming to no good because of their generally aggressive attitude to life. There was an incident every day: "If his nose was not beaten up, then it was another boy's nose". "More than once the screeching of a young crow, hidden in his pocket, had ruptured the silence during prayers". His mother was in tears every single time, but his father was very pleased with his son: "That will be *ein guter Bursche*", he said, "*ein guter Bursche*".

Once, the young Stolz had run away from home for a whole week. His mother was extremely worried. What about his translation of Cornelius Nepos? She vainly sought comfort behind the piano with the music of Herz. Father smoked his pipe, he did not worry at all. The boy was man enough and would come back of his own accord. "The next day they found him, sleeping quietly in his own bed beneath which they found a gun and a large amount of gun-powder". His father simply asked him whether he had completed his translation of Cornelius Nepos. When it turned out he had not, "his father grabbed his collar with one hand, put him outside, pushed his cap onto his head and kicked his bottom, which caused him to stumble". Another week later he returned with the translation.<sup>27</sup>

Stolz becomes a successful entrepreneur, marries the girl he had selected for his friend Oblomov, but whom the latter had rejected, restores order on Oblomov's estate and in his private life, and thus enables Oblomov to continue his quiet and self-indulgent life in a *dolce far niente* which only annoys Stolz.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 46-47.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 153-154.



Finally, the frighteningly fat novel *The Precipice*, numbering no fewer than twelvehundred pages.<sup>28</sup> The book has often been criticized, but nonetheless contains much that is beautiful. Those who want a detailed picture of the life of a classics teacher in the Russian countryside of the 1840's are at the right place here.

Our concern is with one of the minor characters, the teacher Leonty Ivanovich Kozlov. This kind-hearted but sad figure is so full of passion for Greek and Latin grammar, that his mouldering pupils can sometimes even forgive him his boundless dullness, especially since it is generated by an unfailing belief—Kozlov's fortress against the evil in the world—that this grammar forms the key through which access to true, real, and good life, the life of the ancients, can be obtained. It is by no means coincidental that this novel contrasts a classical languages teacher to Raisky, who likes to pose as a thoughtful, modern and progressive artist. "The awakened Oblomov", as Goncharov called him.<sup>29</sup>

Although Kozlov is regarded with compassion and mockery by everybody around him, he is definitely someone for whom the reader develops a warm sympathy and it is clear that Goncharov likes him very much. His pupils at school tease him in a way few teachers will have been teased. The "nihilist" Mark Volokhov is filled with a deep contempt for such a man, "who has not read anything with his pupils but Sallust, Xenophon, Homer and Horace for five years, one year from front to back and the other year backwards".<sup>30</sup> Leonty Kozlov considers modern literature of interest only as far as it has something to do with the ancients: Corneille and Racine are acceptable therefore, and so are Dante and Milton, but of Goethe's work only his *Römische Elegien* and *Italienische Reise* and above all his *Prometheus*, which he knows by heart. Contemporary novels are out, of course: they are no better than "newspaper-reading" (Jacob Burckhardt had the same

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<sup>28</sup> As far as I know, the only complete translation into a Western language is the German translation by August Scholz: Iwan Goncharow, *Die Schlucht*, Zürich (Manesse Bibliothek der Weltliteratur) 1959, 1182 pages. It also includes the complete translation of "Luchshe pozdno chem nikogda" ("Better Late Than Never"): p. 1185-1253. The English translation by M. Bryant (London 1915, reprint New York 1974), 319 pages, is virtually useless: abridged beyond recognition.

<sup>29</sup> Goncharov, "Luchshe pozdno chem nikogda", *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 8, Moscow (Gosud. izd.) 1955, p. 82.

<sup>30</sup> Goncharov, "Obryv", *Sobr. sochin.*, vol. 6, p. 70-71.

opinion). And when Raisky lets on to him that he wants to write a novel, he considers that to be beneath his dignity: "Novels are written on every farmer, every old bag, why don't you take a subject from history?"<sup>31</sup>

But Kozlov was not that bad. His pupils started to appreciate him when they got older, because he had great knowledge and that knowledge turned out to be full of life, be it life in earlier times. From the picture of a classical drinking mug he could evoke the image of a complete banquet, full of cheer and merriment. He did not limit himself to reeling off his lessons, but regularly received his pupils in his garden-house, "my Academy", as he called it. "The young crowd is seated around me and together we look at the images of the old temples and houses and objects, I explain every thing to them, make drawings, and with the older pupils I work ahead, we read Sophocles and Aristophanes together, not everything of course, I skip the purple parts".<sup>32</sup>

Nor is he the sort of teacher who encourages parents to slip through the backdoor to pep up their son's results with a suitable gift in cash or goods. And he is modest. Raisky recalls that, when they were still in university, everybody was full of grand plans for the future, while Kozlov only wanted to be a teacher in the country, even though he was an intelligent fellow. One day Kozlov would probably obtain an appointment at the university and might even become a professor. And he thought so too, and it seemed the height of achievement, a professorship:

Working on entire generations with the living word and passing on one's love and reverence for the profession to eager young people! There would be so much to do, such a lot of material for the taking, such abundance of scholarly devices: the libraries, the contact with colleagues, perhaps even occasional trips abroad, to Germany, to Cambridge, to Edinburgh! One would meet new people, with whom one could correspond

But when he realised what the other side of the coin was, he quickly dismissed those dreams again:

A professor has other duties as well, he has to play his role in several committees, examine students, deliver speeches at solemn occasions, ... it would only confuse me. No, it is nothing for me, let me simply be a teacher in the country.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 5, p. 215.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 5, p. 216.

And then he would return to his books and continue making notes.<sup>33</sup>

Raisky just cannot understand that this "naive child" is so happy and shrugs his shoulders as soon as the word "modern" is spoken. He asks him whether he is not interested in "progress". The answer is not hard to guess: Kozlov is as little aware of his alienation from life as the provincial teacher from the *Letters of a Friend from the Capital*. His books are his life, and to him they create a life full of passion. According to him those books contain the answer to *all* questions with which people are preoccupied these days. "Whatever is not in those books, does not occur in real life either", Kozlov thinks. And as far as progress is concerned:

Of course I believe in progress! All this miserable stuff that people are currently fussing about will disappear. None of it is more than preparatory work, gathered material that has not been animated yet. All those bits and pieces will be kneaded into one ball by the hand of fate, and in due course new colossal shapes will arise from this ball, and a new integrated life that will in turn be a classical period for later generations. How could I not believe in progress! We have strayed from the right course, and now it is our task to return to the right track gradually and strive for the same accuracy in thinking and science, in law and our morality, and in your "social order", as the classics did. ... Vileness, narrow-mindedness, trivial smugness will be recognized, mankind will raise itself and stand solidly on iron feet again. That is what I call progress!

"You are living in a world that has died long ago", Raisky answers, "you do not give yourself any thought, you do not know who you are". But Leonty Ivanovich actually does: "Who I am? I am the teacher of Greek and Latin at the grammar school of this town and I live in my world, exactly like you do in yours. Whatever do *you* amount to, actually?" "Ah, Leonty, stop and think for a moment, you do not do anything useful for your own time. You are walking backwards, you are like a lobster. Never mind those Greeks and Romans, they have had their time, let us do whatever is our task, so that everything around here will wake up from its slumber. There are so many novelties, things those Greeks and Romans knew nothing about, we must find new examples, we must turn ourselves and the people around us into h u m a n b e i n g s, that is our task".

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 5, p. 195-196.

"Go ahead", Kozlov answers then, "but I will not join you. I am busy enough trying to impart the old examples to young people". To which he adds another telling argument: "I want to live for myself, my own life after my own preferences. I do not want to be bothered, I want to eat my noodles and not worry about anything else". "But that is vegetating", Raisky calls out desperately, and then he has to give up. "A happy child!, he thought".<sup>34</sup>

Kozlov has a wife too. A flirt, red hair, cheeky freckles, always a smile on her face, not too trustworthy, and everybody is fond of her. He met her in his student days, but married her much later, because she had not managed to catch another fish. He had fallen in love with her after he had noticed that she had a perfect Roman profile, when she was sewing a button on his coat and moved her face close to his for a moment. Her face bore a remarkable resemblance to those he knew from the bas-reliefs and cameos from antiquity. She became his "golden-locked Cleopatra or Postumia or Lavinia or Cornelia, and he was ecstatically happy with his Ulenka".

Ulenka herself did not have the slightest interest in his world of antiquity. She thought the *Opera Horatii* were operas and a page of a printed Greek text made her think of a cotton pattern.<sup>35</sup> It does not completely escape him that her stomach turns when he tells her enthusiastically about how busy he is with the study of two new annotated German editions of Thucydides and Tacitus in which "the insides of those authors are turned inside out". "She cannot stand them, she only likes living beings", he sighs with regret.<sup>36</sup> Of course things take a wrong turn: when his wife runs off with a frivolous Frenchman, out of pure frustration, as a sort of Russian version of Emma Bovary, Kozlov is inconsolable. He cries hot tears and discovers, too late, that he only loved his books and his Greeks and Romans because he loved her, her silent presence which he nonetheless always took for granted.

In *Better Late than Never*, a review of his own work, published in 1879, Goncharov explained Kozlov's character as follows:

In Kozlov's character I had the self-effacing Russian scholar in mind. At the same time I wanted to describe the fate of Russian

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 5, p. 213-217.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 5, p. 202, 205, 210, 212.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 6, p. 149-150.

scholarship in the oblomovitic society with his character. Without response, without the fertile soil and the company of soulmates in which scholarship may develop itself, he makes his way through life, painfully and miserably, exiled to the countryside, forgotten, without books, without money, surrounded by people who are absolutely not interested in scholarship. He is filled with a deep love of scholarship, but his love is neither nourished nor answered. The soil thirsts for seed, but the seed cannot be sowed anywhere. In his longing for warmth and affection Kozlov had chosen an idol, one who is completely the product of his environment's characterlessness. This idol is his wife. He has pledged his entire reason to scholarship and his feeling to his pathetic wife. But he is abandoned on both sides, he is left behind, burning in the pure flame of his love, and extinguishes.<sup>37</sup>

In the same review he announces that he did not have to make up anything for his book: "Life has written itself with me".<sup>38</sup> For the initial stage of the relationship between Kozlov and his Ulenka he relied on the memories of his own student days. At the immediate beginning of the chapter in which Kozlov is introduced, Goncharov hastens to assure the reader that the "interesting kind of people" to which Kozlov belongs is becoming extinct or has even died out already: "The goddess Isis has snatched the veil from their faces and her priests are now ashamed of their old wigs, cloaks and tailcoats and have replaced them by frack and paletot. And they have gone down among the people".<sup>39</sup> But anyone who reads the work of later Russian writers, Chekhov or Bunin, will find similar characters to Kozlov. With only one important difference: the warm passion of the childlike Kozlov has been replaced by cold priggery.

There is one passage in *The Precipice* where the gods and heroes of Greek mythology are used to symbolize the threat that looms over the patriarchal world of the characters in this book. This passage can be found in Part Three, chapter 20. It is Marfenka's dream. There can be no difference of opinion about the analysis of this dream. The characters tell each other no less than nine dreams in this chapter (which partly turns the whole story into a parody of the dream sequences that frequently occurred in cheap novels in those days). The interpretation of the dreams is completely clear: the patriarchal world of the estate

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 8, p. 102.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 8, p. 97.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 5, p. 192.

where the action takes place will be wiped out violently. One of the people dreams, for instance, that the peasants have sold all the grain on the market and spent all the money; in another dream four peasants have been careless with fire in the haystack, which caused the estate to burn out completely; in a third dream the maids have eaten all the preserves and all the apples one beautiful evening and have pilfered the entire stock of sugar and coffee; in a fourth dream someone has been beaten up, etc.

The key to the interpretation of all the dreams lies in Raisky's narration of his dream: he has dreamt that he suddenly had wings and flew across the room like a fly and then through the window out into space. This gave him an extraordinary feeling of freedom. "But suddenly, while floating high in the air, I saw Mark appearing from behind a bush, pointing his gun at me".<sup>40</sup> And then he had woken up with a start.

Mark is Mark Volokhov, the nihilist and revolutionary. Throughout the book, he plays the part of the villain, and when Raisky has finished his narration, the aged owner of the estate remarks that that man gives *everybody* bad dreams, "he is truly a spectre".<sup>41</sup>

Marfenka, the type of the good-hearted patient Griselda, is the first to tell her dream and her account is by far the most extensive. Raisky thinks it is a very poetic dream too. She dreamt that she sneaked into the house of a count at night. She ended up in his statue gallery, full of antique statues. There was moonlight. "I saw them all: Hercules with his club, Diana, Venus and the one with the owl, Minerva. And the old man too, what is his name?" She means Laocoön. Suddenly the statues had started to move. At first they just moved their head sideways, very slowly, then the rest of their bodies. Diana held out her hand to Minerva. Venus floated ghost-like in Mars' direction.

And then those snakes started to crawl around the old man's body and his face twinged with pain. I thought he would start screaming any moment. Some walked to the window and looked to the moon. They all had eyes of stone, without pupils. ...

Children were moving between the statues as well. The statues seemed to be conferring on something, they put their heads together and whispered. The nymphs grabbed each other's hands

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 6, p. 163-164.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 6, p. 164.

and started a choral dance in the moonlight. My whole body started to tremble with fear. The owl beat its wings and polished its breastfeathers with its beak. Mars embraced Venus, she put her head on his shoulder, and they stood there, like that, while the others walked about or hung around in groups. Only Hercules did not move.

But suddenly he too moved his head, raised slowly, and left his pedestal. My God, he was tall, he reached the ceiling! He looked around, and suddenly he saw me. He trembled, stretched to his full length, and raised his hand (the one with the club). Then they all looked my way, saw me standing there. For a moment they held back, and then they rushed towards me in a tight mob.

After which the good Marfenka had woken up with a start.<sup>42</sup>

Marfenka's dream reminds us of the true story of Baron Wrangel about Count Visapur's death in his statue garden. Count Visapur was the man who had his own servants step white-washed onto the pedestals in his park, every time he wanted to enjoy his open air collection of antique statues. Until he was struck by Hercules' club one day, in a combined effort of Hercules and Venus. The Hercules in Marfenka's dream is the nihilist and revolutionary Mark Volokhov, the man everybody dreamt of, the spiritual descendant of Nikolai Pirogov's student roommate, that "mahogany" friend of Chistov's who had been so enthusiastic about Ovid and Horace.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 6, p. 161-162.

## CHAPTER NINE

### "THE IDEAL PROFESSOR": TIMOFEI GRANOVSKY

He was born on 9 March 1813 and died on 4 October 1855. During the seven dark years from 1848 to 1855 he was badly addicted to alcohol and card-playing. By then he had risen to the level of those rare people who need only be alive to have meaning for other people.

Herzen received the letter with the news of his sudden death when he was on his way in Richmond to take the train to London. Ireland was in an uproar over the trial against Pecherin. "I read it as I walked along, and truly at first I did not understand it. I got into the railway carriage. I did not want to read the letter again: I was afraid of it. Strangers with stupid, ugly faces kept coming in and going out, the engine whistled and I looked at it all and thought: 'But it is absurd! What? That man in the flower of his age, whose smile, whose look is before my eyes now—can he be no more? ...' I was overcome by a heavy torpor and I felt fearfully cold. Where is the Revolution? Where is Granovsky?"<sup>1</sup> By that time Granovsky had already been carried to his grave. His fellow professors had borne the coffin with the mortal remains on their shoulders from his house to Pyatnitsky Cathedral. After the funeral service students carried him on their shoulders to his last resting-place. Professor Sergei Mikhailovich Soloviev, himself a former student of Granovsky, was to deliver the funeral oration, but was completely overcome by tears.<sup>2</sup>

Exactly six years later, on 4 October 1861, a crowd of students with laurel branches and a wreath once again made its way to the grave of Timofei Nikolaevich Granovsky. The Moscow police, with all available men and with reinforcements from the army, was prepared for all contingencies. It was the first public protest meeting in Moscow within living memory. Impassioned

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*, translated by Constance Garnett, revised by Humphrey Higgins, London 1968, p. 505.

<sup>2</sup> Priscilla Reynolds Roosevelt, *Apostle of Russian Liberalism: Timofei Granovsky*, Newtonville, Mass., 1986, p. 175.



speeches were held at the grave. Two former students of Granovsky, including Stepan Vasilievich Eshevsky, Granovsky's successor and historian of (late) antiquity, implored the students not use the commemoration as a pretext for vociferous protest actions, but as a moment of inspiration for "peaceful and fruitful work, ... the real business of the university". The students reacted furiously, but there were no incidents with the police. A week later another demonstration took place, this time in front of the house of the Governor of Moscow. Three hundred and forty students were arrested, of whom thirty-nine were detained.<sup>3</sup>

None of these protesting students had ever seen or heard Granovsky in person. In all likelihood they never read anything by him either, if only because he did not publish a great deal.<sup>4</sup> He was more a "professeur orateur". As a former student, who had been personally acquainted with Granovsky, put it when the latter died: "Now he is no more, and what remains of him will not be able to give the slightest idea of what he was really like".<sup>5</sup> Granovsky became a myth and a symbol. He became the *spiritus rector* of the opposition, not the kind of scholar who is soon made a member of an Academy of Sciences, but "the prototype of the ideal professor". This description comes from a speech delivered in 1905 to commemorate Granovsky by Vasily Osipovich Klyuchevsky (1841-1911), who was a great scholar and a brilliant professor in his own right, and a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.<sup>6</sup>

Not everybody was so appreciative of Granovsky. Mikhail Pogodin, his jealous *collega proximus*, the same person who had been unable to bear Pecherin's popularity with students, sneeringly called him "a German student who has read French newspapers".<sup>7</sup> Dostoevsky went much farther. Just as he drew a negative picture of Pecherin in *The Karamazov Brothers* and of Pecherin

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 179 and 215 n. 43; Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, Chicago 1960, p. 229-230 and 755 n. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Complete edition of his works: *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, ed. by N.F. Merts, 2 vols., St Petersburg 1905.

<sup>5</sup> B.N. Chicherin, *Vospominaniya. Moskva sorokovykh godov*, Moscow 1929, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> V.O. Klyuchevsky, "Pamyati T.N. Granovskogo", *Sochineniya*, vol. 8, Moscow 1959, p. 390.

<sup>7</sup> In his diary, quoted by N.P. Barsukov, *Zhizn i trudy Pogodina*, 22 vols., St Petersburg 1891-1910, vol. 7, p. 115-116.

and Turgenev in *The Devils*, so he gave literary expression to Granovsky in the character of Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky, also in *The Devils*. It is a seriously and maliciously caricatured portrait: Verkhovensky is a man whose brilliant reputation hides complete vacuity.<sup>8</sup>

But just as Dostoevsky seems to have said of himself and all other Russian writers of his time that "we all came out of Gogol's Greatcoat", so Klyuchevsky in his speech from 1905 remarked of himself and the Russian historians of his time that "we are all really students of Granovsky".<sup>9</sup> In the preface to his masterly book on Russian historiography the German historian Hans Hecker writes that during his research he found so many points of agreement between the many historians discussed by him that he felt justified in using the image of a genealogical tree of historians, branching through many generations and extending far into the twentieth century, with Granovsky as the intellectual progenitor.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the name Granovsky occurs on thirty percent of the total number of pages in this book. Certainly one can always discern Granovsky's influence in the work of the liberal Russian historians. He became the classical historian *par excellence*.

In what now follows I shall focus attention on Granovsky's approach to classical antiquity and its effect on others.

Granovsky was the son of a small landowner. He was born in the same province—Oryol—where five years later, in 1818, Turgenev was born as the son of a larger landowner. In 1832 he started to read law in St Petersburg. He would have preferred to go to the historico-philological faculty, but was unable to do so because he had had no Latin and Greek. Most of all he would have preferred to become a writer. He became the first historian in Russia who proclaimed his views on Demosthenes and Alexander the Great, the Roman republic and slavery in the Roman Imperial Age,

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Seeds of Revolt 1821-1849*, Princeton 1979, p. 187, calls this portrait, rather surprisingly, "superbly caricatural but fundamentally sympathetic"; see, however, Roosevelt, p. 180-187.

<sup>9</sup> Dostoevsky's remark has also been attributed to Turgenev: see S.A. Reiser's contribution in *Poetika i stilistika russkoi literatury*, Leningrad 1971, p. 187-189.

<sup>10</sup> H. Hecker, *Russische Universalgeschichtsschreibung. Von den "Vierziger Jahren" des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur sowjetischen "Weltgeschichte" (1955-1965)*, München-Wien 1983, p. xi.

without being able to read the sources from which his knowledge was derived in the original language.

Granovsky's historical career started modestly. In 1835, newly graduated, he was roaming Nevsky Prospekt in search of employment. He found work as a journalist, writing small articles about things of the past for a journal called *Biblioteka dlya chteniya*, which means "Library for Reading". At first sight this seems a somewhat peculiar title, as if there were also libraries "not for reading". On further consideration it is obvious that there were in fact many such libraries. Every scientific library was "not for reading" for ordinary people. The editors of *Library for Reading* aimed to make the knowledge stored in the scientific libraries accessible to a broad public. Of course, if there was to be a broad public, science alone—even in a popular form—was not enough. So a great deal of attention was also paid to other matters about which people might be expected to enjoy reading something light-hearted. In short, it was a kind of Russian *Reader's Digest*.

The journal was founded in 1834 and it appeared monthly, always right on time. The enterprise was financed by Aleksandr Filippovich Smirdin, the first truly commercial publisher in Russia. Besides a publisher he was also a bookseller. In 1832 he had opened a bookshop on Nevsky Prospekt, which soon became the meeting place for literary St Petersburg. As a publisher Smirdin had little to fear from rivals, at any rate in the early years. He had a reputation for paying his authors very decently, and in his case it was true too. So in the end he went bankrupt.<sup>11</sup>

The board of editors of the *Library for Reading* effectively consisted of one person: a Polish professor in the University of St Petersburg appointed in 1822 to teach Oriental languages in the place of the Orientalists Charmois and Demange, who had recently been discharged on account of their unchristian views. His name was Osip Ivanovich Senkovsky. He was a pupil of Ernst Gottfried Groddeck and Joachim Lelewel<sup>12</sup> who had made himself useful as an interpreter for Russian diplomats in the Near

<sup>11</sup> Cf. T. Grits, V. Trenin i M. Nikitin, *Slovesnost i kommertsiya (Knizhnaya lavka A.F. Smirdina)*, Leningrad 1929; N.P. Smirnov-Sokolsky, *Knizhnaya lavka A.F. Smirdina*, Leningrad 1957.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. L. Pedrotti, *Józef-Julian Sekowski. The Genesis of a Literary Alien*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1965; V. Kaverin, "O.I. Senkovsky (Baron Brambeus). Zhizn i deyatel'nost'", *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 6, Moscow 1966, p. 283-477.

East, and when he became a professor at the age of twenty-two, he seemed destined to become an asset to the intellectual life of St Petersburg. Nikitenko did not like him. His diary, 14 April 1827: "An excellent Orientalist, but unfortunately not a very agreeable man. Clearly he lacks breeding, for at times he can be extremely rude. People reproach him for fawning on his superiors and running down his inferiors. His colleagues and his students do not like him and he seizes every opportunity to irritate the former and offend the latter. He is naturally gifted with a sharp mind, but he uses it to affront all those who have established friendly relations with him".<sup>13</sup>

When Senkovsky agreed to edit the *Library for Reading* for an exorbitant sum early in 1834, he more or less abandoned his professorship, although he neither resigned nor was discharged. Apparently he enjoyed protection in high places. When his twenty-fifth anniversary as a professor was celebrated in a solemn academic ceremony in 1847, he even took the liberty of surprising his audience with a lecture (all the more surprising for being read by someone else: he himself did not turn up), in which he argued that the so-called March of the Ten Thousand—the expedition of a Greek mercenary army on behalf of a Persian pretender to the throne, c. 400 B.C., described by the Athenian *condottiere* Xenophon in his *Anabasis*—had not been towards Mesopotamia but towards White Russia.

The launching of a new periodical required the personal approval of the czar. Nicholas I was all but generous in such matters, but to everybody's surprise Senkovsky's application for the imperial *imprimatur* of his *Library for Reading* came through in no time. Uvarov, who had just been appointed minister, was far from pleased and did everything he could to make life hard for Senkovsky, within the limits imposed by the high protection which Senkovsky could evidently count on. As a true-blooded aristocrat and aesthete he abhorred Senkovsky and his purely commercial preference—prompted by greed, Uvarov believed—for cheap and tasteless scribbling. Nikitenko was manoeuvred into an awkward position when he was assigned to censor the *Library for Reading*. A few fragments from his diary, January 1834.

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<sup>13</sup> Aleksandr Nikitenko, *The Diary of a Russian Censor*, abridged, edited and translated by Helen Saltz Jacobson, Amherst 1975, p. 15.

- (1) I am having many problems with this journal. The government gives it a thorough going-over. Informers are sharpening their claws for it, while its editors are literally tearing ahead with their attacks on everyone and everything. Moreover, our respectable literary figures are infuriated because Smirdin is paying Senkovsky 15,000 rubles per year. Each of them wants to wring Senkovsky's neck and I am already hearing cries of "How is that possible? They are letting a Pole guide public opinion! And he's a revolutionary to boot!" ... Senkovsky himself causes me a lot of trouble with his stubbornness. We clash frequently.
- (2) A political storm has finally engulfed Senkovsky. I received an order from the minister to keep a very strict watch on the spirit and direction of the *Reader's Library*. If one were to execute this order to the letter, Senkovsky would be better off taking a clerk's job than remaining in literature. The minister spoke very sharply about his "polonism", his "gutter jokes", and so forth. ... To tell the truth, I really don't know what Senkovsky is guilty of as a litterateur. Lack of taste? That's no concern of the government. ... Of course, I can't vouch for his patriotic or ultra-monarchical sentiments. But it is certain that, out of fear or prudence, he never parades himself as a liberal.
- (3) I went to see the minister. ... I was very well received. Again, the same talk about Senkovsky. ... The minister said he would make it difficult for Senkovsky. It appears that he wants the latter to resign from his editorial post.
- (4) Senkovsky was finally forced to resign as editor of the *Reader's Library*. But it's only for the sake of appearance. At any rate, he is still managing all journal affairs although he did publish his resignation in the *Bee*. It has caused quite a stir among the public. Those who are ill-disposed toward Uvarov strongly censure him. In this instance he really acted despotically.<sup>14</sup>

These four fragments are from 8, 16, 21, and 26 January respectively.

As a countermove Uvarov launched a journal himself: the *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya*, the "Journal of the Ministry of the Enlightenment of the People", a ponderous affair, of which six hefty issues appeared every year up till 1917. Many classical scholars published in it during this period, and for historians today it is a rich mine of information, but for readers then its thoroughness and dullness made it impossible to get through. By contrast, the clown Senkovsky's *Library for Reading* was an unprecedented success. Without receiving any subsidy it already had five thousand subscribers in 1835 and seven thousand in 1837, numbers which no other periodical could even hope to

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 44-45.

reach. It was true that Senkovsky was good friends with Adam Mickiewicz and Joachim Lelewel, and that he exasperated many people, but he was not stupid and could join in on any topic of conversation. He was inclined to take nothing and nobody seriously, including himself, but nevertheless managed to give the impression of holding sound, conservative views.

The success of his journal was not lastly due to Senkovsky's own contributions. He wrote these under the pseudonym Baron Brambeus. Brambeus is suspiciously similar to the Greek word *brabeus*, which means "arbiter" or "judge". This in turn calls up associations with the author of the only work in Roman literature which today still provokes roars of laughter: Petronius, the author of the *Satyricon* or, as people who have no Greek (Fellini) are accustomed to call it, the *Satyricon*. Petronius' sobriquet was Arbiter, because he was the *arbiter elegantiae*—"the judge in matters of taste"—of a Roman czar, Emperor Nero. The Roman historian Tacitus describes Petronius as "a witty and sophisticated person" (Tacitus, *Annales* xvi 18), an expert at debunking himself and others. This description is excellently suited to the equally amoral *arbiter/brabeus* Osip Senkovsky. Baron Brambeus as the Petronius Arbiter of the Russian *imperator* Nicholas I!<sup>15</sup>

Granovsky worked for Senkovsky for one year. In this period he naturally also visited Smirdin's bookshop on Nevsky Prospekt. Via a certain Ya.M. Neverov his contacts extended further and further. Neverov worked for Uvarov's *Zhurnal*. Of course, Uvarov, despite (or on account of) his objections to Senkovsky, kept a careful eye on the latter's *Library for Reading* and in doing so was doubtless struck by the erudition which Granovsky displayed in his contributions to this periodical. However, in his recollections of Granovsky Neverov writes that at some stage Senkovsky himself waited personally on the minister to ask his attention for Granovsky.<sup>16</sup> In any case it was decided that Granovsky should go to Berlin. Count Sergei Stroganov, Curator of the University of Moscow, held out to Granovsky the prospect of a chair of general history in Moscow on his return from Germany. Thus it was that Granovsky found himself in Berlin.

<sup>15</sup> Cf., however, Pedrotti, p. 50, for a different explanation.

<sup>16</sup> Neverov's memoirs have been published in *Russkaya Starina* 1880, No. 4, p. 731-764.

He greatly enjoyed himself in the "Athens on the Spree". He thought it a delightful city: even the whores quoted Horace. In his free time he visited Dresden, Prague, and Vienna. Like most other Russian students in Berlin he suffered from occasional fits of homesickness and melancholy, but the teaching of notably Ranke and the Hegelian Karl Werder, together with frequent theatre visits (Schiller), offered so much in the way of compensation that he felt little need to associate closely with his Russian fellow students. In fact, he thought some of these were peculiar fellows, particularly the classical philologists: "typical seminarists".<sup>17</sup>

Yet he thought it advisable to acquire some knowledge of the classical languages. For Latin he found the same teacher as Turgenev: the schoolmasterish Karl Gottlob Zumpt, since 1818 famous and notorious as the author of a grammar, one which Lev Tolstoi would groan under in 1844. As far his knowledge of the ancient languages is concerned, Granovsky would never achieve more than "small Latin and less Greek". German seemed to him more important. Nor did he give ancient history high priority. Granovsky did not become a pupil of August Boeckh.

In September 1839 Granovsky made his debut as professor in Moscow. At first he felt ill at ease. He was twenty-six years old, and did not have a single university degree. The debut was not a success. "I got into a terrible panic", he later wrote in a letter to his friends Stankevich and Neverov, "I almost fainted". He wanted to walk away, but somebody gently pushed him towards the lectern. "I kept my eyes shut". The very idea that he would see all the faces if he opened his eyes was enough to stop him from looking at the audience. "I made my speech with my eyes shut. That is to say: I quickly mumbled what I could remember of my written text, really it was no more than a whisper, and after a quarter of an hour I bowed and left the room".<sup>18</sup>

After two months the stage fright was over. He started to open his eyes, but what he saw was disappointing. Among his colleagues he had one confrère and kindred spirit, the Latinist D.L. Kryukov, an intelligent, brilliant, and very amiable man, who

<sup>17</sup> A.V. Stankevich, *T.N. Granovsky i ego perepiska*, 2 vols., Moscow 1897, vol. 2, p. 388; *Biografichesky Slovar professorov i prepodavatelei Imperatorskago Moskovskago Universiteta*, vol. 1, Moscow 1855, p. 261.

<sup>18</sup> Stankevich, p. 365; Roosevelt, p. 56.

unfortunately died at the early age of thirty-five in 1845. Kryukov had been one of the elect few who, via the Professors' Institute in Dorpat, had studied in Berlin together with Pirogov and Kutorga. For the rest the intellectual climate in Moscow was dominated by the Slavophiles. They believed that nothing good could come from the West, that Peter the Great had disastrously guided Russian history in the wrong direction with his window to the West, that the works of the Greek Church Fathers (John Chrysostom and the like) were the alpha and omega of wisdom and that nothing need or could be added to them, and that Hegel had manipulated the facts. That, at least, is how Granovsky summed up the situation in 1839.

His manner of lecturing was totally new for the students. He did not read aloud, but talked with the help of just a few summary notes, which he fleshed out as the occasion prompted. This free improvising style not only carried away his audience, but often he himself would also be carried away by his flood of words. "Whenever that happens, I have to get hold of myself again".<sup>19</sup> This off-the-cuff method had an important additional advantage for the speaker: Granovsky had a soft voice and a slight speech impediment, and these drawbacks could thus be cleverly camouflaged and even turned to his profit. He was the first professor, certainly in Russia, who realized that *every* performance for a room full of people is a form of theatre. Hence his lectures would frequently end with spontaneous applause from the audience, and always with the complete physical and mental exhaustion of the "actor".

Like every good actor, Granovsky enjoyed having an audience that was enthusiastic and grateful. As a good speaker can kindle enthusiasm in an appreciative audience, so an appreciative audience can also stimulate a speaker. And anybody who pays as much personal attention to each of his students as Granovsky did, will automatically get an appreciative audience. He kept open house for them every week, went through their lecture notes with them and corrected them, discussed their written work more extensively than any other teacher, organized *privatissima* at his home, and from his private library lent everybody books which were unobtainable elsewhere.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem.*



In short: Granovsky became for history students what Vladimir Pecherin in 1836 could have become for the students of classical languages: an overflowing source of continual inspiration. Pecherin failed in this because he collapsed after a few months under the depressing burden of his environment. Granovsky, despite feeling so homesick for Berlin, kept it up for twelve years. Then he too succumbed, withdrew more and more, grew depressed, and became addicted to drinking and playing cards. Herzen's reaction to the report of Granovsky's death was already quoted at the beginning of this chapter. This quotation is taken from the *in memoriam* that Herzen wrote for Granovsky at the time. It is one of the most magnificent and most moving passages among the many impressive passages to be found in Herzen's memoirs.<sup>20</sup> What follows here, Herzen's reaction after meeting Granovsky in 1840 for the first time, comes from the beginning of the same piece of writing:

... In 1840, when I was passing through Moscow I met Granovsky for the first time. He had only just come back from foreign parts and was preparing to occupy his Chair of History at the University. He attracted me by his noble, thoughtful appearance, his melancholy eyes with their wrinkled brows, and his mournful good-natured smile; in those days his hair was long, and he wore a dark blue Berlin overcoat of a peculiar cut, with velvet *revers* and cloth fastenings. His features, dress, dark hair—all gave so much grace and elegance to his figure as he stood at the dividing line between passing youth and a richly developing manhood, that even a man not so easily captivated could not have remained indifferent to him. ...

Granovsky was gifted with an amazing *tact* of the heart. His whole nature was so remote from the irritability of diffidence and from pretentiousness, it was so pure, so open, that he was extraordinarily easy to get on with. ... That was why one was not afraid to speak to him of the things of which it is hard to speak even with those most near and dear. ...

In contact with his affectionate, serene, indulgent spirit all awkward discord vanished, the voice of over-sensitive vanity was almost mute. He was a link of union among us for many things and many people, and often brought together in their sympathy with him whole circles that were at enmity among themselves, and friends on the brink of separation. ...

... the doings of men interested him passionately. ... Granovsky

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<sup>20</sup> Herzen, p. 498-510.

thought in history, learned from history, and later on made propaganda through history.<sup>21</sup>

Much has been written about the principles of Granovsky's philosophy of history.<sup>22</sup> The result can be summed up in a few key words or key names: Romanticism, Hegel, Ranke, Saint-Simon, and Comte. *Bien étonnés de se trouver ensemble*, one might be inclined to say, and in fact Granovsky was not averse to eclecticism. But eclecticism is better than one-sided dogmatism. The main thing is that Granovsky was the first to bring a wide audience of students into contact with European ideas which were totally new for them; that he made a deep impression by combining a "liberal" faith in God with a Hegelian and positivistic faith in history as a purposeful and systematic process of gradual political and social progress; that he believed he could see in the past both the guidelines and lessons for the future and also a certain degree of consolation for the shortcomings of the present; and that this conception could go together with two other approaches to the past which were usually regarded as mutually exclusive: history as "poetry" and as a strictly scientific discipline. Unfeasible? Perhaps. But in any case Granovsky brought faith and hope. Pogodin could only offer cynicism and scorn, and he, as Granovsky's predecessor in the teaching of general history, had got no further than reading from the by then antiquated handbooks of August Ludwig Schlözer and Arnold Heeren.

To be able to become *professor ordinarius* Granovsky needed just one thing: the title of doctor. But to become a doctor one needed a master's degree, and Granovsky did not even have that. His official request for permission to submit a doctoral dissertation to the faculty without having first defended a master's dissertation was rejected by Uvarov. In 1843 he therefore presented a master's thesis, followed in 1849 by the required doctoral thesis. In view of the controversy stirred up by these two dissertations, something needs to be said about them here.

The master's dissertation is entitled *Volin, Iomsborg and Vineta*. Initially the faculty refused to grant him the master's title for it. After weeks of bickering he was nevertheless allowed to defend his theses in public on 21 February 1844. Usually the defence of a

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 498 and 501.

<sup>22</sup> See esp. Hecker, p. 58-67, and Roosevelt, p. 79-84.

dissertation was not something which students flocked to attend, but now some seven hundred turned up. The gentlemen in gowns behind the table were ready to tear the candidate apart. The exchange of views lasted long, very long (which was not unusual in Russia). It was continually interrupted by loud cheering and hooting from the audience; and at the end there was a standing ovation, lasting fifteen minutes, for Master Granovsky. *Novus ordo nascitur*, Pogodin noted with Virgilian resignation in his diary that night: "a new order is born".<sup>23</sup> What was so exciting about Volin, Iomsborg, and Vineta?

Volin, or Wolin, is the name of the Polish island which, together with the German island Usedom, closes off the Stettiner Haff on the border between Germany and Poland. It is now a popular seaside resort. In the eighth century the island was a West Slavonic city state, remains of which were unearthed by Polish archaeologists. Iomsborg is the name of a Viking fortress which is mentioned in Old Norwegian sagas. The location of this fortress is not known. In his dissertation Granovsky demonstrated on philological grounds that ancient Norwegian Iomsborg could not be identical to West Slavonic Volin.

But he was above all concerned with Vineta. The romantic nationalistic Slavophile historians of Russia were firmly convinced, in their need to trace the Slavonic past as far back as possible, that Vineta was a historical city, a city of the West Slavs, a city of marble, which had been swallowed up by the waves of the Baltic Sea, like Plato's Atlantis, during a period of great prosperity and expansion. Archaeological remains of marble could even be demonstrated near Volin, which they identified with Iomsborg. Granovsky, however, argued in his thesis that the entire existence of sunken Vineta was a fabrication, thus exploding the myth of the glorious Slavonic Atlantis cherished by the Slavophiles. Granovsky showed that Vineta was merely the product of a feverish nationalistic fantasy, pseudo-science which lacked any foundation in the sources.<sup>24</sup>

The doctoral dissertation is entitled *Abbot Suger*. It is the first Russian monograph on a subject from the history of the Middle

<sup>23</sup> Roosevelt, p. 96-97 and 103-104.

<sup>24</sup> "Volin, Iumsberg i Vineta", reprinted in: *Sochineniya T.N. Granovskago*, vol. 1, Moscow 1856, p. 213-276; cf. Ch. Vetrinsky, *T.N. Granovsky i ego vremya. Istoriesky ocherk*, St Petersburg 1905, p. 238-261.

Ages in Western Europe. Suger was Abbot of the Abbey of Saint-Denis near Paris. He died in 1151. The Abbey of Saint-Denis was traditionally closely allied to the French royal house, and Suger, as the Abbot of Saint-Denis, was the confidant and most prominent adviser of King Louis VI and King Louis VII. In his dissertation Granovsky argues that Suger had not only advised the two kings in their attempts to contain the centrifugal forces of feudal liege lords, towns, and ecclesiastical institutions, but had actually shaped their policy himself and to that end had developed a new, strongly centralistic conception of absolute and enlightened monarchy. The book is highly readable for non-specialists as well, and this was precisely what Granovsky had intended, since he believed that historians should write books for a wider audience than their colleagues alone. This was indeed one of the main criticisms levelled at his book.<sup>25</sup>

This criticism gave rise to a controversy which lasted two years and which might, to a certain extent, be described as a head-on collision between Granovsky's Moscow school and Kutorga's St Petersburg school. For although they themselves did not intervene in the controversy, it was at bottom a conflict between Granovsky and Kutorga. The issue at stake was how far historians should cater to the needs of the reading public. Should historians occupy themselves with socially relevant subjects and bring the past to life for their readers in an understandable way, or should they aim at pure science?<sup>26</sup>

Granovsky was an emphatic supporter of the first approach, Kutorga of the second. Granovsky was blamed—especially after his death—for being merely a cheap popularizer instead of a real scholar. This reproach was wholly unjust. But in any case the further development of historiography in Russia was much more strongly determined by Kutorga's direction than by that of Granovsky. Serious scholars and scientists generally shunned a popular approach, though it would probably be going too far to say that they were afraid of burning their fingers. They simply believed in Science and thought it fundamentally wrong to play the role of prophets of warning, preachers of penitence, or

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<sup>25</sup> "Abbat Sugery. Istoricheskoe izsledovanie", *Sochineniya*, vol. 1, p. 277-394; see esp. his preface, p. 279, quoted (in German) by Hecker, p. 69-70 n. 75.

<sup>26</sup> Roosevelt, p. 141-146.

champions of reform. But the public, of course, was still eager to be educated in history with the help of non-technical literature, and so this "hole in the market" was filled with all kinds of semi- or pseudo-scientific writings by "terrible simplificateurs". Pure science's *faktopoklonstvo*—"adoration of the facts"—was regarded by Granovsky's heirs, who were more concerned with society and its problems, as antisocial and apolitical behaviour, indeed, as a betrayal of the intellectual's vocation. But these heirs constantly formed a minority. No one of Granovsky's calibre was to be seen in Russia again, and this is one of the reasons why he continued to be idealized later.

There are two striking points about both of Granovsky's dissertations and the discussion which they provoked. The first is that Granovsky took little notice of the customary division of history into periods and states or nations. He saw such sharp distinctions as a form of vivisection of the past. He preferred to occupy himself with transitional periods and borderline areas, those segments of time and space where different layers overlap.

The second point is that he defined general history as the field of scientific activity in which the researcher concentrates on what is general, on what links up people and phenomena from sometimes completely different periods and thus makes them comparable. A logical consequence of this definition is that he liked to draw analogies. For a historian like Granovsky, who lived in a political and social order where there was no normal freedom of opinion, this had the advantage of allowing him, while giving an interpretation of and passing judgement on something that had occurred long ago and far away, to speak out at the same time on an analogous situation in his own time and environment, even if it would only be understood by the discerning ear. In short, Aesopic language, comparable with what Pushkin had done in many poems, to which he would sometimes also add the caption "after the Latin", to mislead the censor.

Professional historians are generally sceptical about the use of analogy, especially if the comparison is extended too far. The only lesson taught by history, they say, is that it does not teach anything. A good example of a cheap and all too superficial analogy can be found in an article by the Slavophile amateur historian Aleksei Khomyakov on a subject from the history of late

antiquity and the time of the migration of Germanic peoples, the fall of the Burgundian kingdom of Worms.

This kingdom was wiped off the political map round the middle of the fifth century when the Burgundians suffered defeat at the hands of the Roman army leader Aetius, who also used the help of the Huns and their king Attila. A new territory was assigned to the Burgundians in the Rhône valley. The king of the Burgundian kingdom of Worms is called Gundicharius in late Roman sources. The story of the fall of his kingdom entered German epic poetry of the Middle Ages as the *Nibelungenlied*, where Attila and Gundicharius are called Etzel and Gunther.

Khomyakov's article dealt with the question of whether the Burgundian kingdom of Worms had fallen through the Huns or through internal weakness and "inner decay", and he sought the answer to this question mainly in the latter circumstance. But in reality Khomyakov did nothing but project his ideas on the contemporary set-up back onto the fifth century. For him the Huns represented the youthful vigour of the Slavonic East, that is, Russia, and the Burgundians, with their internal dissension and decadence, stood for Western Europe. In an article of four pages Granovsky was able to show that this representation was in no way founded in the sources. He added that this kind of profundity had nothing to do with science and was characteristic of *all* Slavonic historiography.<sup>27</sup>

By way of analogy it is interesting to draw attention here to a similar discussion in Western Europe a hundred years later about the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. In 1927 the Frenchman Ferdinand Lot argued resolutely that the Roman Empire had collapsed through "maladie interne"; in 1944 his countryman André Piganiol proclaimed exactly the opposite view: he believed the Roman Empire had been "murdered" by the Germans and the Huns. Only a few contemporaries of these eminent scholars realized that they had both been strongly guided by their perception of their own time: for both historians the Roman Empire represents France, and "Huns", of course, was an abusive word for Germans in France during the Second World War.<sup>28</sup> This is not

<sup>27</sup> "Pismo iz Moskv (25 marta 1847)", *Otechestvennye Zapiski* 1847, No. 4, otd. 8, p. 200-203; Roosevelt, p. 125-126.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. A. Demandt, *Der Fall Roms. Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt*, München 1984, p. 455 and 481-482.

the only example one could mention in this connection. The phenomenon is a classic one.

In chapter III I remarked that, shortly after 1800, Mikhail Muraviev had organized a series of public lectures at the University of Moscow. This proved a failure when the public failed to turn up. Forty years later it was different. Granovsky owes much of his fame to his public lectures. Now there was an audience: everybody went, writes Pavl Vasilievich Annenkov in his memoirs of the forties: old men tore themselves away from the card-table, young girls forgot about dancing.<sup>29</sup> Three times Granovsky held a series of public lectures: in 1843-1844, in 1845, and in 1851. Especially the first series was a sensational success. Herzen was delighted:

The conclusion of his first course of lectures was a regular ovation, a thing unheard of at Moscow University. When at the end, he thanked the audience, everyone leapt up in a kind of intoxication, ladies waved their handkerchiefs, others rushed to the platform, pressed his hands and asked for his portrait. I myself saw young people with flushed cheeks shouting through their tears: "Bravo! Bravo!" There was no possibility of getting out. Granovsky stood as white as a sheet, with his arms folded and his head a little bent; he wanted to say a few words more but could not. The applause, the shouting, the fury of approbation doubled, the students ranged themselves on each side of the stairs and left the visitors to make a noise in the lecture-room. Granovsky made his way, exhausted, to the council-room; a few minutes later he was seen leaving it, and again there was endless clapping; he turned, begging for mercy with a gesture and, ready to drop with emotion, went into the office. There I flung myself on his neck and we wept in silence.

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Discussions which up till then had only taken place in the secluded atmosphere of the salons, now became public discussions via the lecture-room, which had become a theatre. A theatre, not a circus: "he did not deck our history in laces and silk; quite the contrary: his language was severe, extremely grave, full of force, daring, and poetry".<sup>30</sup>

The series of 1843-1844 was devoted to the Middle Ages. Contrary to what was (and is) customary, Granovsky did not have this period begin with the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. He

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<sup>29</sup> P.V. Annenkov, *The Extraordinary Decade: Literary Memoirs*, Ann Arbor 1968, p. 81.

<sup>30</sup> Herzen, p. 504-505.

dealt with the period from the end of the Roman republic to the coronation of Charlemagne as emperor as one large transitional period. This is strongly reminiscent of the view of the republican Humanist Leonardo Bruni from Arezzo in his *History of Florence* (1429),<sup>31</sup> who saw the Roman Imperial Age as being characterized by arrogant power and grovelling servility. Granovsky had little to say in favour of the Roman Imperial Age, and this led the audience to suspect that, by analogy, he had little to say in favour of the Russian Empire.

Granovsky often fuelled such suspicions in his lectures. He was not so crass as to believe that one could meaningfully compare the proletarians of Rome with the European proletariat of the nineteenth century, but he was clever enough—and brave enough—to point out the similarities between the exploitation of the land with the help of slaves and serfs in the Roman Empire with the Russian system of serfdom. He pointed out that for a long time slavery in Rome had created the material conditions for prosperity (for the upper crust) and culture, but at the same time he explained that in the long run the system of slave labour in Rome had had a deleterious effect on the economy, and he thus endorsed a view which was particularly controversial in the forties, a view held by more enlightened minds in Russia, namely that the Russian system of serfdom was also a serious obstacle to a sound economic development. And many a Russian landowner would have recognized himself in Granovsky's description of the conduct of Russian and medieval landowners. Granovsky knew what he was talking about: at one stage he himself had become a landowner possessing a few hundred serfs.

He also found much to fault in the Roman educational system with its one-sided emphasis on rhetoric. In the time of the Roman republic this education and the orators schooled by it had had a clear and useful social function, but with the advent of autocracy this function had disappeared and in its place came flattery, intrigue, and betrayal. The same line of reasoning can already be found in Tacitus' *Dialogus de oratoribus* from the first century A.D., and Granovsky had read Tacitus in Berlin. A teacher in Rome

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. M.A. Wes, "La fin de Rome dans l'historiographie de l'humanisme italien", *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome* 36 (1974), p. 114-115.



"had to remain silent about the most important things touching mankind and the state, ... between him and the students there was always something half-spoken, half-understood, half-uttered".<sup>32</sup> The world of Rome was a sick world, life there was unhealthy; there was enough pomp and splendour, but it concealed an ocean of suffering and misery.

What was lacking in Rome, according to Granovsky, were simple matters like solidarity, intellectual freedom, and thinking and acting in terms of a constitutional state instead of according to patriarchal whim.<sup>33</sup> Every trained historian of antiquity now knows that these bold statements can be supported with a wide range of data from the sources. Yet even today little attention is given to the notion of the Roman Empire as a "dreary prison" (Gibbon).

Granovsky's comparative and presentist method was not unknown in Germany. In chapter III I mentioned in this connection the lectures of Christian Gottlob Heyne in Gottingen, which were also massively attended. Heyne's topical approach to the Graeco-Roman past was continued in Germany by liberal historians such as Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776-1831) and Johann Gustav Droysen (1808-1884), and was best represented in England by George Grote (1794-1871). The lesser gods in this field included figures now passed into all but complete oblivion, such as Adolf Schmidt (1812-1887), who published a book in 1847 on (the lack of) freedom of thought and religion in Rome in the first century A.D.,<sup>34</sup> and Carl Wilhelm Nitzsch (1818-1880). These were all historians whose work Granovsky knew and appreciated.

In an article from 1847 on recent publications he quotes with approval a remark by Nitzsch: ancient history forms the basis and starting-point of all the so-called humanist sciences. These sciences will only be able to withstand the pressure exerted by the universal advance of materialism if writers of ancient history succeed in avoiding both arid enumerations of facts and cheap rhetorical pathos, and if they constantly show that people in the

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<sup>32</sup> M.N. Kovalevsky, "Neizdannye universitetskies kursy Granovskago", *Golos Minuvshago* 1913, No. 9, p. 224, quoted by Roosevelt, p. 83.

<sup>33</sup> My summary is based on Roosevelt, ch. 5, esp. p. 80-84 and 89.

<sup>34</sup> (Wilhelm) Adolf Schmidt, *Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert der Kaiserherrschaft und des Christenthums*, Berlin 1847; biographical sketches: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 31, p. 703-713; *Biographisches Jahrbuch für Altertumskunde* (= *Bursians Jahresberichte*) 53 (1887), p. 1-18.

world of antiquity were occupied with the same vital problems which still concern all decent people today. "I am sorry to say", Granovsky adds, "that these words hardly find any response with the large majority of philologists".<sup>35</sup>

After staying in Italy in 1842-1843 Nitzsch published a book on the Gracchi in 1846.<sup>36</sup> The famous brothers Tiberius and Gaius Sempronius Gracchus have gone down in history as the heroes of a failed revolution, after vainly trying to introduce land distribution programmes to create a new existence for the great mass of Roman farmers, who, as a result of Roman imperialism, had lost their small but free and independent livelihoods and had thus been degraded from *agrarius* (landowner) to *proletarius* (landless person). Both brothers paid for their attempts by being cruelly murdered, the first in 133 B.C., the second twelve years later. The great landowners of Rome were opposed to their plans.

In 1849 Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903), then thirty-two, held a lecture on the Gracchi in Leipzig. In the same year Mikhail Bakunin was arrested in nearby Dresden for his part in the revolution there and sentenced to death. A more topical subject than the Gracchi—topical both in Germany and Russia—could not be found in the whole of antiquity. In Germany Mommsen's lecture was followed by an invitation to the author from the Weidmannsche Buchhandlung to write a history of Rome. The result was his classic *Römische Geschichte*, a work of profound social commitment for which he later was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. In Russia this kind of thing was inconceivable, certainly after 1849. Granovsky wrote in 1850:

Our situation grows more insufferable every day. Every progressive movement in Western Europe has an after-effect here in some repressive measure. People are being denounced by thousands. They have twice started to get up a case against me during the last three months. But what does personal danger matter in comparison with the universal oppression and suffering? It was proposed to shut the universities, but for the present they have confined themselves to the following measures: they have raised the students' fees, and diminished their number by a law according to which there may not be more than three hundred students at a university. In Moscow University there are fourteen hundred

<sup>35</sup> Cf. V. Buzeskul, "Ob otnoshenii T.N. Granovskago k antichnomu miru", *Germes* 1913, p. 171-180, esp. p. 175.

<sup>36</sup> C.W. Nitzsch, *Die Gracchen und ihre nächsten Vorgänger*, Berlin 1846.

students, so we must expel twelve hundred to have the right to admit a hundred new ones. The Institute of Nobility is closed; many institutions are threatened with the same fate, the Lycée for instance. Despotism is crying aloud that it cannot live in harmony with enlightenment. New programmes have been drawn up for the Cadet Schools, The Jesuits might envy the military pedagogue who drew up this programme. The priest is instructed to instil into the cadets that the greatness of Christ was comprised pre-eminently in submission to authority. He is depicted as a model of submission and discipline. The teacher of history is to unmask the trumpery virtues of the ancient republics and to bring out the grandeur of the Roman Empire, which has not yet been understood by historians, and which lacked only one thing, hereditary succession! ...<sup>37</sup>

This is a quotation from a letter from Granovsky to Herzen, who was already living as an exile in Western Europe. Granovsky had noticed that Herzen was losing touch with reality in Russia as a result of this. He started to believe in "the people" as a vague and innocent power which would more or less automatically change everything for the better and save the country. The Slavophiles also had this kind of naive faith in "the people". Granovsky thought it was nonsense. Against it he set his Hegelian faith in the decisive actions of great men. In the past, too, it had always been strong individuals whose vision and willpower had guided the history of their people in a new direction. It was time for such a strong individual to stand up in Russia. Or rather: it was time *again*, for in the past Peter the Great had performed this role.

It is against this background that Granovsky, after an interval of five years, gave another series of public lectures in the spring of 1851. This time it was a series of just four lectures. They dealt with four strong individuals.<sup>38</sup> One of these had lived in antiquity: Alexander the Great (the other three are Tamerlane, Louis the Pious, and Francis Bacon). There is no reason to suppose that Granovsky chose Alexander the Great as the first of this foursome because the heir to the throne in Russia was called Alexander.

Alexander the Great has always strongly appealed to the imagination on account of his spectacular expedition to Asia: a nineteen-year-old young man who, only recently proclaimed King of Macedonia, crossed the Hellespont (now called the Dardanelles)

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<sup>37</sup> Herzen, p. 508-509.

<sup>38</sup> "Chetyre istoricheskaya kharakteristiki", *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1.

and with a relatively small army marched on to the Indus and in passing brought an end to the two-hundred-year-old supremacy of the Persians in this entire area (including Egypt)—such a young man simply could not sink into oblivion. But for the historians Alexander, owing to this achievement, was always a figure larger than life, a "Fremdkörper" which admitted of no explanation and could only be marvelled at.

Moreover, Alexander was not a Greek but a Macedonian, the son of the Macedonian king Philip, and Philip of Macedonia happened to be the man who had defeated the assembled Greeks in 338 B.C. at Chaeronea. In the view of Greek history prevailing in the early nineteenth century Chaeronea was the place where the freedom of the Greek city states had been "murdered". For years the democratic Athenian leader Demosthenes had warned against Philip in his speeches, but nobody had listened to him. It was only later, especially in the early nineteenth century, that his "Philippic speeches" came to be regarded as the classic statement of the ideal of freedom and autonomy of the Greek city states. When Napoleon was undermining the autonomy of the European states around 1800 and the need was felt, especially in Germany, for a power which would be able to stop him, Niebuhr—not yet a professor in ancient history but a Danish diplomat—anonously published a German translation of Demosthenes' *First Philippic* and dedicated it to Czar Alexander I. The pamphlet had no effect whatsoever, for shortly after its publication Napoleon won the Battle of Austerlitz.

It is understandable that many Germans compared the situation in Germany with the situation in ancient Greece: one language, one culture, but extreme political disintegration, "Klein-staaterei". It is also understandable that the picture of Philip of Macedonia was invariably drawn in the blackest colours and that Greek history after Chaeronea was regarded as a period of decline and brushed aside. Alexander the Great compelled admiration, but indeed it was compelled admiration; it was impossible to like him, or at any rate to place him. He was a "Fremdkörper".

Granovsky's view of Alexander the Great was entirely based on the work of Johann Gustav Droysen. In 1833, at the age of twenty-five, he had published a biography of Alexander which no longer treated him as a "Fremdkörper". This book had been followed in 1836 and 1843 by two volumes of a *Geschichte des Hellenismus*. The

term Hellenism was introduced by Droysen to denote the world and the culture resulting from Alexander's great expedition. His liquidation of the Persian Empire had created room for a completely new order with almost unlimited possibilities for the countless Greek emigrants who started to settle in the new cities in Egypt (Alexandria) and the Near East.

As a good Hegelian, Droysen had described this whole complex of events—or rather, had wanted to describe, for he did not fully work out his conception—in terms of thesis-antithesis-synthesis. Hellenistic culture was the synthesis of Greek culture (thesis) and Oriental culture (antithesis), with Christianity, born three hundred years later, as the culmination of this synthesis.<sup>39</sup> Droysen believed, and Granovsky echoed him, that none of this would have happened without the contribution of Alexander of Macedonia, the genius who seemed to have appeared out of the blue.

As for the incorporation of Russia in Droysen's conception, Granovsky argued in his Alexander and Tamerlane lectures that modern European civilization was still a synthesis of classicism and Orientalism; that Russia as the heir of Byzantium—the Greek-speaking half of the Roman Empire—was part of Europe; that the Slavs had rendered Europe a good service by having stopped the Mongols; that relations between Russia and the rest of Europe had been restored by Peter the Great; and that it was now Russia's task to enrich Christian Western culture further with a worthy contribution of her own.<sup>40</sup> Of course, this argument also implied the idea that Russia should open herself up to West European culture, and thus in his own way Granovsky diametrically opposed the anti-Western obscurantists of the "seven dark years", in the middle of which he found himself in 1851.

In these years, as I explained at the end of chapter VI, everything to do with pagan antiquity had come to be viewed with suspicion. Uvarov had lost his influence over the czar and his life's work was systematically destroyed. His attempt to turn public opinion in his favour with an article in the *Sovremennik* of March 1849 had

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<sup>39</sup> See, on the concept of "Hellenism" in Western historiography, R. Bichler, "Hellenismus". *Geschichte und Problematik eines Epochenbegriffs*, Darmstadt 1983.

<sup>40</sup> Roosevelt, p. 153-154.

been unsuccessful. Other attempts would follow. The advocates of (education in) the classical languages and ancient history realized that it was not the right time for professorial quarrels and that it was vital to win the public of outsiders to their cause. They had neglected their public relations for too long. Nor did they fail to see that Granovsky knew how to reach the public better than anyone else. Thus we see that Uvarov and Granovsky came closer to one another in their final years (they both died in 1855), like Kutorga and Granovsky, and that in those final years Granovsky set himself up as the earnest spokesman of the "classicists".

In this role Granovsky, as a historian, concentrated on the history of antiquity rather than on Greek and Latin. This is first of all shown by his extensive contribution to the essay collections *Propilei*. The name of these collections refers to the great Propylaea, the entrance gates in the classical Athens of Pericles and Sophocles to the sacred domain of the Acropolis and the Parthenon, the temple of the patron goddess Athena. At the same time it refers to Goethe. Between 1798 and 1801 he had published a number of collections called *Propyläen*, in which he had set out his ideas on the art of antiquity for a broad public and with an educational purpose. In view of his admiration for Goethe, it is no surprise to find that the Russian *Propilei* were undertaken on the initiative of Uvarov. Formally they were published by the University of Moscow, but in actual fact they were a private enterprise. Unlike Goethe's *Propyläen*, the *Propilei* were written by various authors and covered a broader section of antiquity than art alone.

The first of five collections of *Propilei* appeared in 1851, the fifth in 1856. All volumes were lavishly executed, apparently to impress the public, and impress the public they did. Volumes I-III ran to a second edition in 1856 and 1858, and volumes III and IV prompted the radical critic Nikolai Chernyshevsky to declare in a review that knowledge of antiquity was indispensable for a sound general education. Fifty years later they were still well-known in Russia, but in 1922 they had faded into oblivion and a classical scholar, who believed that knowledge of the classics was rapidly declining, attempted to revive the memory of the *Propilei*.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> S.A. Pereselenkov in: *Sertum bibliologicum v chest A.I. Maleina*, Petrograd 1922, p. 88-93.

Eight of the people mentioned in these chapters made one or more contributions to the five collections. They are Sergei Uvarov himself, his son Aleksei Sergeevich, the poet Zhukovsky, Buslaev, Katkov, Kryukov, Kutorga, and Granovsky. Contributions from prominent German scholars (in a Russian translation) were also included, notably an article by Otto Jahn (now better known as the biographer of Mozart) on Gottfried Hermann, who had died in 1848.

The editor of the *Propilei* was a young classicist of whom more would be heard in the future: Pavl Mikhailovich Leontiev (1822-1874). He wrote thirteen essays, often very long, for the *Propilei*. Winckelmann was the subject of a substantial contribution from another rising star, who would later cause a great deal of commotion: Aleksandr Ivanovich Georgievsky (1830-1911).

Granovsky wrote an article of 57 pages for the *Propilei*, spread out over volumes III and V. In it he offers his readers a summary, with his own comments, of the three volumes of *Vorträge über Alte Geschichte an der Universität Bonn gehalten* by Barthold Georg Niebuhr, which had appeared in Berlin in 1847, 1848, and 1851. To get the right perspective on this article, however, we first need to say something about Niebuhr, not as a scholar but as a politician. For it was only in combination with—and to some extent only after—an intensive career in politics that Niebuhr was able to realize his boyhood dream of making a name for himself as a philologist and historian. He is now known in the first place as the founder of the historico-critical or historico-philological school of history, but that is of less importance here.<sup>42</sup>

Although he created a sensation in his early years as a scientific child prodigy and was offered a chair in Kiel in 1800 at the age of twenty-four, Niebuhr first entered the Danish civil service, being Danish by birth. For six years he worked as a diplomat for international trade and as a banker for the Danish government. In this period he was the close assistant of the Minister of Finance, Ernst, Count Schimmelmann, whose private secretary he had become in 1796. Since 1788 (when serfdom was abolished in Denmark) Count Schimmelmann had been working hard on a programme of agrarian reforms, which had created a new class

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<sup>42</sup> See S. Rytönen, *Barthold Georg Niebuhr als Politiker und Historiker*, Helsinki 1968.

of free peasants in Denmark with the help of government credit. For Niebuhr Schimmellmann had thus become the Tiberius Gracchus of Denmark. Niebuhr became even more convinced that land reform was the right policy when he went on a diplomatic mission to England and Ireland and noted the deplorable situation of the oppressed peasants on the other side of the North Sea. As a result of these experiences, his study of Roman history (in particular his unpublished study *Zur Geschichte der römischen Staatslandereien*) came to focus mainly on the history of the anonymous mass of Roman peasants. Carl Wilhelm Nitzsch, who was also known to Granovsky, can be called a follower of Niebuhr in this regard.

The rest of Niebuhr's political and diplomatic career can be left out of consideration here. Siding against Napoleon, he joined the Prussian army, and it was only in 1810-1813 that he could devote himself, as a teacher at the University of Berlin founded in 1810, to what had hitherto mainly been a hobby, the study of the history of the Roman republic. Here it was obvious to him that, with regard to the conflicts between the patricians and the plebeians in the time of the early Roman republic, his convictions could only allow him to choose the side of the plebeians, whom he regarded as oppressed peasants, and of course he also showed himself an admirer of Tiberius Gracchus and his programme of land reform.

- After 1823, as a professor in Bonn, he got more and more time to pursue his scholarly and educational activities. His *Vorträge über Alte Geschichte*, published much later in 1847-1851, had been a sensational success in Berlin at the time, and this had to do with his reputation as a statesman and diplomat (from 1816 to 1823 he had been the Prussian ambassador in Rome) and with his ability to make the history of antiquity topical through all kinds of implicit and explicit comparisons with later periods and with his own time.

In view of all this it is obvious that Granovsky was strongly attracted to Niebuhr. Their ideas about the political, social, and cultural function of history were in close agreement, and the same applied to their political preferences: liberal, but with a conservative and national slant; enlightened, but not revolutionary; monarchical, but the monarch had to be an enlightened monarch who was not afraid to associate with intellectuals and who was capable of listening to their ideas.



Niebuhr's *Vorträge* offer a continuous survey of the history of the world of the ancient Near East and Greece up till the time when this world became part of the Roman Empire. Now obviously a teacher who has set himself the task of completing this kind of survey in a given number of lectures must continually select his material. He cannot deal with everything, and he will pay more attention to some subjects and figures than to others. This attention is of course divided according to the importance which the teacher attaches to the subjects and figures he is dealing with. Again it is obvious that a reviewer, in summarizing and discussing a work that runs to some fifteen hundred pages, will work selectively, and will pay more attention to certain parts of it if he believes that these are more germane to what he wishes to teach his readers.

It is here that a simple quantitative analysis of Niebuhr's three volumes and Granovsky's article produces an interesting conclusion.

Volume II of the *Vorträge* deals with Greek history from the middle of the fifth century B.C. up to and including the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. The figure to whom most attention is devoted in this volume is Niebuhr's beloved Demosthenes: over against 35 pages for Demosthenes there are, for instance, just 24 pages for Pericles. This breadth of attention should be related, of course, to the pamphlet from 1805—the translation of Demosthenes' *First Philippic*—in which Niebuhr, as a new Demosthenes, had warned against Napoleon, in whom he saw a new Philip of Macedonia. But in volume III, dealing with the period which since Droysen has come to be called the Hellenistic age, two much *less* classical figures are given even more attention: 36 pages for two Spartan kings, Agis IV and Cleomenes III.

The ample space devoted to these two kings should be placed in the same context as Niebuhr's positive position on Tiberius Gracchus. The comparison between the Gracchi and Agis and Cleomenes goes back to antiquity: in his *Parallel Lives* Plutarch linked his double biography of Tiberius and Caius Gracchus to his double biography of Agis and Cleomenes. He had a good reason for doing so. Like the Gracchi in Rome a hundred years later, Agis and Cleomenes in Sparta in the third century B.C. had caused a social revolution which had started as an attempt at social reform. In this period the population of Sparta was divided into a

small and powerful group of large landowners and a large but powerless group of peasants and have-nots enslaved by the landowners. An attempt by Agis IV to change this situation through peaceful reforms had broken down on the resistance of the landowners with their vested interests: he was murdered in 241 B.C. More than ten years later Cleomenes had tried again: all debts were cancelled, property was annexed on a large scale, and land was divided up. But in 222 B.C. his work was undone by a Macedonian military intervention.

If Niebuhr already deals extensively with these events in Sparta, Granovsky goes even further. His review of Niebuhr's three volumes of *Vorträge* numbers 57 pages. He devotes 31 of these to volume II, which has more than 500 pages, and 9 to volume III, which numbers almost 600 pages. Of the 31 pages dealing with volume II he spends 6 pages, so about twenty percent, on Niebuhr's favourite Demosthenes. Of the 9 pages relating to volume III he spends more than half on Agis and Cleomenes! It was Granovsky's way of making a public contribution to the debates on serfdom in Russia, which was finally abolished in 1861.

The second instance in which Granovsky operated as a spokesman of the classicists concerned his view of the exemplary function which the history of antiquity offered to those in search of the historical lines and patterns which left their mark on their own age. In 1850 Granovsky had been approached by the new minister of education via the Rector of Moscow University, V.I. Nazimov, with the request to write a new handbook of general history in which the past would be considered from a distinctly Russian point of view. Granovsky accepted the commission and set out in detail what he thought such a book should be like.<sup>43</sup>

In his outline Granovsky explained that historians ought not to adopt an exclusively antiquarian approach to the past, but should search for "eternal laws" of human behaviour, which must and could be inferred from historical ages and processes already completed. No other period was more suitable for tracking down such laws than antiquity. To silence critics in advance, Granovsky stated that there was no reason for a modern autocracy to fear the republicanism of antiquity, as long as one did justice to the specific geographical and historical circumstances which had

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. Roosevelt, p. 159-160.

allowed the development and (temporary) survival of city states in the Graeco-Roman world.

On the other hand, the fact that Graeco-Roman history had ultimately resulted in the Roman Empire was no reason for Granovsky to embrace this empire unreservedly. Indeed, as he wrote in his outline, the power of the Roman emperors, like that of the despots of the ancient Near East, had been based on the use of violence without being supported by the voluntary respect and loyalty of the subjects. He felt no need, he wrote, to ruin young people with eulogies on the aberrations of the monarchical principle. But he did not dispute the monarchical principle as such.

Granovsky repeated this standpoint in a memorandum which he wrote in the summer of 1855, two months before his death. Its title was: *The decline of classical education in the gymnasia and its inevitable consequences*.<sup>44</sup> Somehow the text of this memorandum came to the attention of the Minister of Education, A.S. Norov. Norov was the last education minister appointed by Nicholas I. In September 1855, some six months after the czar's death and a month before the death of Granovsky, Norov exchanged views about the memorandum with Granovsky. The minister believed that it contained useful leads for a new policy. "If our enemies will triumph over us, it will be only a result of the superiority of their educational system", the minister remarked.<sup>45</sup> This sounded hopeful. But who were the enemies? Foreigners? The English and the French in the Crimea? Or were the enemies hidden in Russia's own house? But then where exactly were they in this house? In the basement? In the attic? Or somewhere in between?

According to Granovsky the "inevitable consequences" of the decline of classical education included the rejection of everything that classicists like Uvarov had praised in antiquity: the beauty of classical art, the wisdom of Plato and Aristotle, the combination of beautiful form and noble content in the poetry, even "the mathematical precision of the classical languages" (which Granovsky himself hardly knew). But more was at stake. Already in 1851 he had taken the opportunity, in a review of the

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<sup>44</sup> "Oslablenie klassicheskogo prepodavaniya v gimnasiyakh i neizbezhnye posledstviya etoi peremeny", *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 2, p. 349-356; Buzeskul, p. 178.

<sup>45</sup> Quotation derived from G. Dzhanisiev, *Iz epokhi velikikh reform*, Moscow 1894, p. 223.

master's thesis of his pupil and kindred spirit Ivan Kondratievich Babst (later professor in political economics and statistics), to join battle with the opponents of education in the classics:

Some of these say that the field of classical antiquity has been trodden and grazed down to such a extent that there is little still to be discovered and that it is better to focus one's attention on something else. Others take a further step and claim that inquiry into Graeco-Roman antiquity distracts the mind from *reality* or introduces views into it which belong to a world which had its own rules and from which we, in the meantime, have become wholly alienated. According to these people, the social and political institutions of Athens and Rome and the culture they produced are now irrevocably part of the past. At the same time one is struck by the fact that these critics are seldom familiar with classical culture. Without being capable of an independent judgement, they intervene in a discussion of which the outcome will be decisive for the training of future generations of young people.

The remarkable thing here is that the repressive and preventive measures taken against Greek by Nicholas I as early as 1851—even before the Crimean War—had started a discussion between the "classicists" and the "realists". The Crimean War of 1854-1855, with its dramatic outcome for Russia, had painfully exposed Russia's shortcomings in science, technology, modern armament, and modern forms of organization and management, and this was grist to the mill of the realists. Education in Greek and Latin suddenly came to be condemned on quite different grounds. Fearing a Russian "1848", Nicholas I had seen a political danger in it. Now, in addition, the gymnasium was regarded as incapable of meeting the requirements of the time.

Granovsky acknowledges in his 1855 memorandum that the phenomenal development of industry since the peace of 1815 made it necessary to pay more attention to education in technical subjects. But this should not be at the expense of other "and perhaps higher" educational objectives. It was, in short, the familiar biblical argument that man shall not live by bread alone (which, by the way, is only a convincing argument if brought forward by those who lack bread).

Granovsky can easily refute the argument that there were so many suspect and even undermining elements in antiquity and its culture. In general gymnasium pupils were not at all possessed by revolutionary ideals. "What do the Graeco-Roman world and

the present-day ideals of communism and socialism, which currently hold the masses of the West in thrall, really have in common? Are not these ideals much more akin to so-called realism?" Granovsky can point out that the revolutionaries of France and Austria came more often from technical schools than from classical gymnasia and that they had read more contemporary than classical literature. The measures taken against the classical gymnasium thwarted the regular development of an educational system which had proved its worth, and they would inevitably strengthen those very views which they aimed to oppose. It was simply short-sighted and stupid to count education in the classical languages and ancient history as one the causes of the French Revolution.

Granovsky opposes the new argument of the pragmatic realists with a plea for balance. An overemphasis on knowledge which is practical and directly applicable to the material aspects of life would lead to superficiality and to the habit of basing far-reaching conclusions on insufficient evidence. It would prejudice the development of ideals of goodness and beauty and it would make "European society" so psychically and ethically diseased that the only remedy would be death. It would inculcate in young people a materialistic view of life, it would deform their minds and fill them with heartless self-confidence. The answer, then, was balance, for any one-sidedness would be dangerous and harmful. "It is the task of the pedagogues to develop *all* potential skills of young people harmoniously".

As for the contribution which research into antiquity might make to this harmonious development, Granovsky repeats his argument of the exemplary nature of ancient history as the history of a self-contained whole, which would enable the researcher to draw up "eternal laws". With regard to teaching, Granovsky remarks that its aim is not the accumulation of knowledge but the development and training of mental powers. He recommends the well-tried philological method as "an indispensable tool in ethical, aesthetic, and logical training".

At the end of his memorandum Granovsky makes an essential reservation: "philology can only be truly productive if there are enough *good* teachers, who not only have expertise, but also dedicate themselves in the right way".

In earlier literature and particularly in Soviet-Russian publications dealing with Russia in the 1840's and 1850's it is often suggested that Uvarov and Granovsky were sharply opposed to one another: the calculating and reactionary servant of the emperor versus the spirited and radically liberal intellectual. This idea was strongly encouraged by what Herzen wrote about them in his memoirs. In reality, Uvarov, for all his scheming, was not so reactionary and Granovsky, for all his spirit, was not so radical, as Cynthia Whittaker has conclusively shown in her excellent biography of Uvarov from 1984.

The ideas of Uvarov and Granovsky on progress through enlightenment ran largely parallel. They had no utopian dreams of popular democracy and socialism: progress should be cautious and gradual, and enlightenment should be guided from above. Peter the Great had been the first to show the way: from Moscow via the centre of policy in St Petersburg to Berlin. The link with the West would be an enrichment for both sides; Russia would not be an intellectual colony of the West, but would make its own contribution to the culture of a Europe including Russia, the Common House of Europe, of which the foundations had been laid in Graeco-Roman antiquity.

In the summer of 1848 Granovsky visited Uvarov, but not in Moscow or St Petersburg. He had to make a long journey in a hired coach.

Not far from the battlefield of Borodino, where thirty-six years earlier Napoleon had defeated Kutuzov and whence he had marched on to a deserted and burning Moscow, lies a small town called Uvarovka. A little northwards, some 150 kilometres from Moscow, surrounded by woods and a park with rare and even tropical flowers and plants and trees, was Uvarov's countryhouse: Poreche. It still exists, and recently there have even been plans to make it into a national museum.<sup>46</sup>

Poreche was Uvarov's favourite residence. It was where he usually stayed after he had been discharged as minister, and he was also buried there. The guests called Poreche "a Russian Athens" and compared it with Plato's Academy. There was no

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<sup>46</sup> C.H. Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education. An Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786-1855*, DeKalb, Ill., 1984, p. 239-242 and 298 n. 47.

ballroom in Poreche. The library—twelve thousand books, one of Europe's most valuable private libraries, especially in the field of classical antiquity—was upstairs. A gentleman does not study on the ground floor.

From the library, through an open connection with two arcades, one had a view of the central room, a square room, where the purple of the walls contrasted finely with the white marble of the columns, which supported the lunettes and the graceful over-arching dome. A steady light came from above through an enormous opening in the dome and a glass belvedere above it. Compared with the more subdued tone of the library, the domed room radiated a pleasant, bright light. In each of the four corners, on a marble pedestal in the form of a fluted cylinder, there was a large porte-flambeau, with in the middle of each of the four walls, against the background of a marble arch, a marble sculpture group by Canova. On either side of these four groups stood more than lifesize marble busts of Dante, Machiavelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Ariosto, and Tasso.<sup>47</sup>

The room's *pièce de résistance* was directly under the dome. It was a large oval with rounded-off ends, a monolith 1.78 metres long and with a maximum width of 0.71 metre. On both sides of it there were beautifully executed reliefs depicting Dionysus, Ariadne, Hercules, Pan and his companions. According to some, the oval was an ancient sarcophagus, since the inside was chiselled out but not polished. In shape the oval most resembled the large granite basins in the Cortile del Belvedere of the Vatican Museo Pio-Clementino. Uvarov himself was convinced that the oval was not a sarcophagus and had not served any funerary purpose, as Winckelmann had surmised, but was a basin for the holy water used in the ritual of the Dionysian mysteries. He had first seen the oval in 1843, somewhere in a corner of a disused Jesuit church in the Piazza Navona in Rome, and he was very proud of having been able to purchase it before the art collectors of the Louvre and the King of Prussia could. The oval was subsequently transported to Russia.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> P.M. Leontiev, "Bakkhichesky pamyatnik grafa S.S. Uvarova", *Propilei. Sbornik statei po klassicheskoi drevnosti*, vol. 1 (1851), otd. 1, p. 135-142; Whittaker, p. 241-243.

<sup>48</sup> S.S. Uvarov, "O drevne-klassicheskom pamyatnike perevezennom iz Rima v Poreche", *Propilei*, vol. 3, otdel 1, p. 188-194.

This, then, was the place where Granovsky was Uvarov's guest. In Poreche Uvarov was a different man from in St Petersburg. In Poreche he was himself. The two gentlemen held philosophical conversations, a professor aged thirty-five and a minister aged sixty-two, one still young, the other not yet old. They spoke of God and the world, the ancient world and the new world, and they agreed that the transitional periods in history were the most interesting: the tired dignity of the old order that is coming to an end and the confusing maelstrom of the new order that is fighting its way through. Demosthenes versus Alexander the Great. They also agreed, in the summer of 1848, that they themselves were in the middle of such a transitional period. One still had a whole life before him, and what had the other not done since he had turned thirty-five in 1821? Did not the familiar past hold out hope for the future? Uvarov recalled with longing the times of Alexander I, the young Alexander I. Granovsky hoped for a new Peter the Great. The professor assured the minister that the ways of Providence were full of surprises. The minister knew this too.<sup>49</sup>

Seven years later, in the year of his death, Granovsky wrote: "It seems to me that, since the time of Peter the Great, there has never been a greater need for a thorough and wholesome Enlightenment in Russia".<sup>50</sup> Russia was growing numb under the booming of cannons in the Crimean War. Uvarov died a week after the fall of Sebastopol, Granovsky a month later. Herzen quotes the conclusion of one of Granovsky's last letters to him:<sup>51</sup>

On all sides a general, obscure murmur can be heard, but where are the forces? where is the resistance? It is painful, brother—and there is no escape *in this life*.

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<sup>49</sup> Whittaker, p. 239; Roosevelt, p. 132.

<sup>50</sup> Stankevich, *T.N. Granovsky i ego perepiska*, vol. 2, p. 407.

<sup>51</sup> Herzen, p. 509.



## EPILOGUE

In 1714 Peter the Great launched a new ship in Riga. He held a speech:<sup>1</sup>

Who would have thought, lads, who would have thought thirty years ago that you, Russians, would be building ships with me here in the Baltic Sea and feasting in German dress? Historians assume that Greece was the ancient seat of learning; from Greece learning passed to Italy and spread through all the European lands. But the uncouthness of our forefathers stopped it from penetrating beyond Poland, although before that the Poles, and all other foreigners as well, had been plunged into the darkness in which we still live, and it was only owing to the unremitting efforts of their rulers that they were finally able to open their eyes and assimilate European knowledge, art, and style of life. I would liken this movement of learning upon the earth to the circulation of blood in the human body; and it seems to me that one day learning will leave its present seat in England, France, and Germany and pass to us for a few centuries, in order then to return to its birthplace, Greece.

And Czar Peter raised his glass.

Two hundred years after Peter the Great the bronze horsemen had to make way for the proletarians on their armoured vehicles. The city of Peter became the city of Lenin. Since 1926 a statue of Lenin has been standing in the square in front of the Finland Station. Lenin is not sitting on a horse, like Peter, but is standing on the gun-turret of an armoured vehicle. "It is painful, brother". But the ways of Providence are full of surprises: the city of Lenin has once again become the city of Peter.

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<sup>1</sup> "Quoted" by I.V. Kireevsky in his Letter to Count E.E. Komarovsky "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia" (1852), in: M. Raëff (ed.), *Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology*, 1966, p. 176. The translation is by Valentine Snow. Raëff on this letter: "Naturally, his (*i.e.* Kireevsky's) assertions should not be taken as statements of historical fact" (*ibidem*, p. 174).

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